THE LOVE LETTERS OF THOMAS CARLYLE AND JANE WELSH

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I saw that in its depth far down is lying
Bound up by love together in one volume,
What through the universe in leaves is scattered.
PARADISE XXXIII, 85-87.

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THE LOVE LETTERS OF THOMAS CARLYLE AND JANE WELSH—I

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NEW LETTERS AND MEMORIALS OF JANE WELSH CARLYLE. A Collection of hitherto Unpublished Letters. Annotated by THOMAS CARLYLE, and edited by ALEXANDER CARLYLE, with an Introduction by Sir JAMES CRICHTON BROWNE, M.D., LL.D., F.R.S., numerous Illustrations drawn in Lithography by T. R. WAY, and Photogravure Portraits from hitherto unreproduced Originals. In Two Volumes. Demy 8vo.

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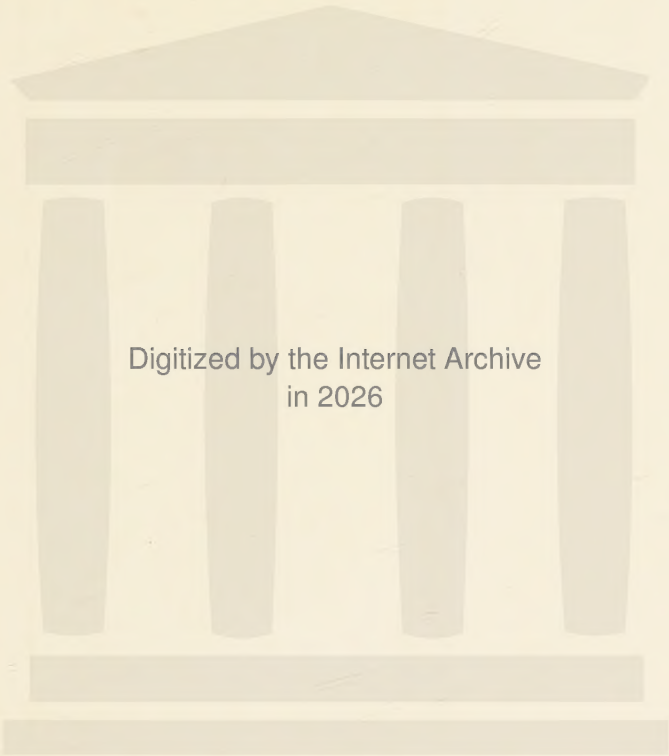
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JANE WELSH AS A GIRL

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THE LOVE LETTERS OF THOMAS CARLYLE AND JANE WELSH

EDITED BY ALEXANDER CARLYLE, M.A.
WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS
TWO IN COLOUR. TWO VOLUMES. VOL. I

LONDON: JOHN LANE, THE BODLEY HEAD
NEW YORK: JOHN LANE COMPANY. MCMIX

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SECOND EDITION

Set up and Electrotyped by . . . . . .
The Cambridge University Press, Mass., U.S.A.
Printed by The Ballantyne Press, Edinburgh

135795

PREFACE

CARLYLE's injunction against the publication of the Letters which passed between himself and Miss Welsh before their marriage having been already violated, it has seemed to me to be no longer prohibitive: the holy of holies having been sacrilegiously forced, desecrated, and polluted, and its sacred relics defaced, besmirched, and held up to ridicule, any further intrusion therein—for the purpose of cleansing and admitting the purifying air and light of heaven—can now be attended, in the long run, by nothing but good results. If entrance into the sacred precincts, with this object, be an act of sacrilege, it is at worst a very venial one! Had there been no previous intrusion—no infraction of Carlyle's interdict—I need hardly say that nothing in the world or beneath it would have induced me to intrude therein. But what would have been rank sacrilege at one time has now, in the altered circumstances, become a pious duty. I offer no apology, therefore, for publishing these Letters, for in my judgment none is needed. I should rather be inclined to apologise for not having performed so obvious a duty long ere now.

In the first volume of his "Life" of Carlyle Mr. Froude printed only one Letter in full (a very

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short one from Miss Welsh); but he gave extracts from thirty-three others.[1]

The extracts selected by Mr. Froude, and more especially the narrative into which he has woven them, have never seemed to impartial readers to give a true conception of the correspondence, or of the relations which subsisted between Carlyle and Miss Welsh. It would appear that Mr. Froude either never read the correspondence in its entirety, or that he failed to comprehend the plain meaning of the writers. It is indeed quite likely that he, being an Englishman, failed to understand the nature of a Scottish wooing, and so came to wrong conclusions. This, however, was no excuse for misquoting the Letters, and misinterpreting their obvious meaning.

Besides Mr. Froude and the present Editor, only two other men have hitherto read the full text of these Letters: the late Professor Charles Eliot Norton, and the late poet and essayist, William Allingham. Both of these litterateurs have condemned Mr. Froude's use or abuse of the correspondence. Norton's condemnation appeared as an Appendix to the second volume of the "Early Letters of Thomas Carlyle," published in the year 1886. It is a masterpiece of just, temperate, and effective criticism, which instantly opened the eyes of the public to the real character of Mr. Froude's discharge of the sacred task which had been entrusted to his care, and produced a widespread distrust in him and sympathy with Carlyle. But Norton's excellent exposure of Mr. Froude's "methods," though it came as a revelation to many people, was, from the limited

[1] The total extracts, including the short Letter above mentioned, cover in all forty pages of the "Life"; the Love Letters printed in the present two volumes fill over seven hundred and thirty pages.

space at his command, necessarily incomplete and quite inadequate to the performance of the well-nigh endless task he had so well begun. Only a very few examples of Mr. Froude's aberrations could be noticed. "To exhibit completely," says Professor Norton, "the extent and quality of the divergence of Mr. Froude's narrative from the truth, the whole story would have to be re-written."

Mr. Allingham's opinion of the "trusted biographer's" work is pithily and tersely expressed in his lately published "Diary," thus: "Carlyle's 'Life.' Melancholy book. F. has manipulated his materials cunningly."

My own opinion of Mr. Froude's treatment of the Carlyle papers, being to some extent already known to the public, I do not purpose to add anything here that can rationally give rise to unpleasant controversy. Indeed, since I have decided to publish the Love Letters exactly as they were written, and thus lay open the materials on which Mr. Froude founded (or ought to have founded) his account of the love story of Carlyle and Miss Welsh, there will no longer be any grounds for controversy on the subject; because every reader will have the full evidence before him, and be in a position to judge for himself.

Few friends of Carlyle or Miss Welsh will, I believe, disapprove of the publication of the Love Letters after they have read them and compared them with the version given in the first volume of Mr. Froude's "Life of Carlyle"; nor can any friend of Mr. Froude reasonably make complaint; for, if his account of the courtship be true, the Letters will only confirm it and justify him; if it is untrue, they will condemn him, but only to the

extent and in the degree which he justly merits. I have carefully refrained from commenting on, or even mentioning, except in three or four exceptional cases, Mr. Froude's mis-printing or mis-interpreting of these Letters. To have done so in detail would have required at least an additional volume; and, moreover, the ungrateful task is now rendered superfluous, since the correct text is here placed before the reader.

The possession of these Letters I have long felt to be a heavy responsibility; and the question whether to publish or not to publish them has been for several years a subject of anxious deliberation. Only three courses seemed to be open to me: First, to destroy the original Letters, and thus allow Mr. Froude's account of the courtship and his inaccurate version of the Letters to be handed down to posterity as true and correct, practically unchallenged except on the limited scale of Norton's Article, above referred to. This course seemed an impossible one: I was not Vandal enough to destroy such Letters as these, even if there had been nothing to consider but their literary value. Secondly, to preserve the originals, and leave them behind me to be published, perhaps in later years, by some one who would probably know very little of the subject. This, too, seemed to be an inadvisable course, for many reasons, though it certainly would have been the easiest one for me to follow! Thirdly, to edit and publish them now.

After deliberate consideration, and consultation with friends and relatives of Carlyle, I decided to adopt this last course. I have since been confirmed in my decision by the hearty approval of numerous

literary men and women to whom I have at various times read a considerable part of these Letters. And the more I consider the question myself in all its bearings, the more I am convinced that the course I have chosen is the best and the wisest.

Professor Norton, in 1886, hesitated to follow this plan, for the reason that some of the Letters were in his judgment "too sacred for publication," though he did publish a few of them, and give extracts from others—enough to prove that Mr. Froude's story was the reverse of true on many points, but not enough to exhibit more than a mere fraction of his perversions, or tell the true story with anything like completeness. Much has happened, moreover, since 1886. Mr. Froude's story assumed, a few years ago, another phase still more disreputable and even disgusting. Reticence in the case of Carlyle's biography has unfortunately long ago ceased to be a virtue; it may easily degenerate into a vice. In the name, and for the sake, of truth and justice, it is now clearly advisable that every possible ray of light should be thrown on the subject. To withhold, much more to destroy, authentic and valuable evidence would be little short of a crime.

Nor is it necessary to re-write the story of the courtship of Carlyle and Miss Welsh: it is already written beautifully, humanly, frankly, fully, and inimitably by two of the best Letter-writers of the nineteenth century. Nothing more is really necessary than to transcribe accurately their own words, and allow their Letters to speak for themselves.

I have printed, practically in full, all the Letters that have been preserved of this correspondence.

My copy has been taken in every case direct from the original Letter, with the greatest care and exactitude; except to correct the spelling and punctuation in some of Miss Welsh's Letters, I have not consciously deviated in the slightest point from the text of the originals. The omissions, which are few and of little importance, have been indicated in the usual way, and the nature or subject of the omitted matter, when deemed of sufficient interest, has been pointed out in footnotes. Unfortunately some of Miss Welsh's Letters, especially those of earlier date, have been lost, or destroyed—probably by herself; but the collection has not been added to or diminished since it was returned by Mr. Froude in the latter part of the year 1884. The materials are therefore exactly those on which Carlyle's biographer based, or rather, ought to have based, his story of the courtship.

Notwithstanding the regrettable loss of a few of Miss Welsh's Letters, enough remains to make the story of this courtship perfectly plain and intelligible. Had these Letters but been kept unpublished (as Carlyle had ordered), or published in full and correctly, what a different reputation would Carlyle's have been in the opinion of the multitude; and from what a mountain of stupid calumny and inane babble would this poor world have been saved!

I have supplied a few explanatory introductions to individual Letters, footnotes where they seemed needed, traced to their sources quotations and literary or classical allusions; and, for the convenience of readers who may be unacquainted with foreign languages, I have given a literal translation of all the Latin, German, French, and Italian

phrases which were likely to be unintelligible to such readers.

These Letters tell "the old, old story" as it has never been told before; they prove that there was in the hearts of the writers a deep and abiding love for each other; that each was in a sense the complement of the other and an indispensability; that "love and friendship encircled their kindred souls"; and that each was to the other not only the best but the only real helpmate that could have been chosen from the whole circle of their acquaintances. Carlyle spoke the absolute truth when he said to Miss Welsh: "It would be little less than impious to renounce this heavenly feeling that unites us. Has not a kind Providence created us for one another? Have we not found each other? And might not both of us go round the Planet seeking vainly for a heart we could love so well?"

Few unprejudiced people will rise from a perusal of these volumes without having formed a higher opinion, a better and juster appreciation, of the noble qualities of head and heart which Carlyle and Miss Welsh have so frankly and naturally displayed in the Letters of their ante-nuptial correspondence.

A. CARLYLE.

EDINBURGH, *February*, 1909.

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Urges Miss Welsh to persist and let nothing daunt her. If he once saw her the woman Nature intended her to be, he would feel a pleasure nothing else could give him. Again encourages her to read, think, and gather ideas from every source. Extols the art of composition: tells her he would rather be a great philosopher or poet, than be the Emperor of all that lies between the Poles 137–139

LETTER 38. MISS WELSH—Haddington, 8 January, 1823

Her studies interrupted by unwelcome and unpleasant visitors. Had finished Rollin before they came. Distressed on account of her bad memory. Does not like "Tell" so well as "Wallenstein." Would give Shandy and her pearl necklace to be able to write a Story like Carlyle's. —Ridicules Edward Irving.—Asks where the best account of the time of Charles I. is to be found . . 139–142

LETTER 39. CARLYLE—3 Moray Street, 12 January, 1823

On the faculty of memory. Recommends Miss Welsh to fix in her mind the few great events which influenced all the rest, and which stand like beacons in the great sea of history; other events will be remembered by the simplest of all connections, that of cause and effect. Sends "Vertot" to her, and recommends other histories. Impresses on her the necessity of remembering the two windows of

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history, chronology and geography. Calls Miss Welsh a wicked creature for making him laugh so at poor Irving. Names the best histories of Charles I.'s time . 143–149

LETTER 40. MISS WELSH—Haddington, 18 January, 1823

Intrusive visitors gone, but others coming—"What waste of time and temper *in prospectu!*" *O rus, quando te aspiciam?* Reflexions on her aunt-in-law. Envies Carlyle for being a native of Annandale, as she is persuaded that his splendid imagination owes a part of its lustre to the traditionary lore of his Fatherland. Had *she* been brought up in a land of tales instead of a land of turnips!—Asks Carlyle to send her an outline of some Tale—Were she sure that her idol Fame were within her reach, she would not mind how she loitered by the way. She cannot turn back *now*, and *would* not if she *could*. What tempted Carlyle to send her that deplorable volume of "Calamities"? 149–153

LETTER 41. CARLYLE—3 Moray Street, 20 January, 1823

Regrets having sent Miss Welsh D'Israeli's "Calamities." Advises her to look on the matter in a different light: unfortunate authors are not the only unfortunates; it is the few ill-starred wretches, and the multitude of ill-behaved, that are miserable, in all ranks, and among writers just as elsewhere.—Commends Miss Welsh to moderate her ardour, cultivate patience, and avoid precocity. Laments her inordinate love of fame. The desire of gaining the applauses of others is an unworthy principle of action. Entreats her to continue to love her mother, her truest friend. Invites her to speak of her difficulties, and tell him all that lies on her heart . . . 153–159

LETTER 42. MISS WELSH—Haddington, 23 January, 1823

Thinks Carlyle's admonition disproportionate to her complaints. Tells him why she is sometimes set a-fretting. Defends her love of fame, and explains the nature of it. She desires the love of moral esteem, not the love of gratitude.—Has news for Carlyle which she hopes will

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please him as much as it pleased herself: her Mother wonders why he never thinks of coming out to see them! 159–162

LETTER 43. CARLYLE—3 Moray Street, 4 February, 1823

Describes a winter's storm and its effects on the inhabitants of Edinburgh. Accepts the much valued invitation to Haddington. Reminds Miss Welsh that it is a whole twelvemonth since he has seen her face. Congratulates her on her diligence in study during the last three months 162–164

LETTER 44. Carlyle—3 Moray Street, 18 February, 1823

Greatly pleased with his recent visit.—Has read Miss Welsh's "Tragedy," and calls it a very curious affair for a girl of fourteen to have written. Asks her to be careful of the little *armchair*, which stands in the room beside her parlour.—Is vowing to begin another Tale. Feels that under her auspices, it were a crime to let sickness or any other cause keep him one moment from his speed.—Has had a long and hearty Letter from Irving, whose mind is evidently in a very foamy state. Cites a passage from Irving's Letter, referring to her.—Advises her to take out-door exercise every fine day 165–172

LETTER 45. MISS WELSH—Haddington, 28 February, 1823

Would have written sooner, had not the "callers by profession" been swarming in every quarter.—Cannot read "Gillies," but is staggering through "Goethe" as fast as she can. Does not think she will like Goethe much unless he improves greatly.—Has discovered a Genius. Gives a full description of him and his surroundings.—Is delighted with "Las Cases" 172–175

LETTER 46. CARLYLE—3 Moray Street, 4 March, 1823

Demurs as to Miss Welsh's conclusion regarding the "Genius," and prophesies that he will turn out badly.—Cannot procure for Miss Welsh Madame Necker's

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"Madame de Staël." Advises her to go on with Gibbon, and to make another attempt to read "Götz." High appreciation of Goethe.—Is going to write a "Life of Schiller" for the "London Magazine," instead of another Tale. Begs Miss Welsh to come to Edinburgh without delay: "let me see your sweet face and hear your wicked tongue again" 176–179

LETTER 47. MISS WELSH—Haddington, 24 March, 1823

Her mind in a horrible hubbub for the last week, and cannot write or study.—Cannot fall in love, and to sacrifice herself out of pity, is a degree of generosity beyond her capability. The untoward fate of poor girls, really very unjust.—"Providence had stickit a fine callant" in her own case.—What a wee darling this "quartern-loaf" of yours must be!—Her beggar-genius turning out badly.—Has discovered another *protégé* to take his place.—Reading Gibbon and Goethe: is at last beginning to recognise the Goethe Carlyle admires 179–183

LETTER 48. CARLYLE—3 Moray Street, 26 March, 1823

Sitting down to the "Life of Schiller" in the most vinegar aspect; becomes another man when he has read Miss Welsh's Letter.—Seems to him that their destinies are yet long to be intermingled, that they are yet to walk side by side through many bright scenes, and to assist each other in many a noble purpose.—Encourages Miss Welsh to proceed in her study of Gibbon. Is glad that she likes his thrice-illustrious Goethe.—Thinks more highly of her for dismissing the ancient sinner, Boccaccio.—Is desired by Boyd to translate "Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship" 184–190

LETTER 49. CARLYLE—3 Moray Street, 6 April, 1823

Prays Heaven to bless Miss Welsh for thinking that "we shall never quarrel more." Designs to quarrel with her many thousand times before all is done,—each quarrel to last fifteen minutes at the utmost.—Was never angry at Miss Welsh, and does believe he never will be seriously so.—

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Encourages her to confidently entertain her literary hopes —Makes light of her difficulties in writing. There is no help but patient diligence, and *that* will conquer everything.—Praises Goethe, and thinks him the only living model of a great writer.—Sends Miss Welsh a fresh supply of Schiller's writings.—The Bullers' annoying changes of plan.—Tells Miss Welsh that he has yet seen little of her, but enough to make him pray that he may never lose sight of her in this world—or any other . . 190–196

LETTER 50. CARLYLE—3 Moray Street, 14 April, 1823

Urges Miss Welsh to come to Edinburgh; is to depart for Dunkeld or Killiecrankie, or somewhere else, in the first week of May.—Advises her to go on with "Gibbon"; hopes that she will stick by his skirts, in spite of all the roughness of the path, till he bring her to the end.—The "Life of Schiller" swells on his hands, and will need to be divided into Parts.—Is reading Spenser's "Faery Queene" 196–198

LETTER 51. MISS WELSH—Haddington, 16 April, 1823

Annoyed at not getting to Edinburgh. Sees some hopeful signs of their leaving home. These "reddings up" are fearful affairs.—The fine weather is unfavourable to her studies.—Is busy with "Gibbon," her adorable "Life of Necker," and with "Tieck."—Amusing interview with a German gentleman-beggar.—Has written no Essay on Friendship, or on anything else, yet loves Carlyle sufficiently.—Since beginning this Letter her Mother has said something of their going to Town on Friday or Saturday. Will send Carlyle word as soon as she arrives 198–204

LETTER 52. CARLYLE—3 Moray Street, 17 April, 1823

Finishes Part I. of the "Life of Schiller."—Sends it to Miss Welsh to read with the eye not of a friend but of a *critic* 204, 205

LETTER 53. MISS WELSH—22 George Sq., 30 April, 1823

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Asks Carlyle to come in the early part of the day to George Square, Edinburgh, and to be very "reasonable" for a little while. When her Mother goes to Dumfriesshire, she will see him as often as he pleases 206

LETTER 54. CARLYLE—3 Moray Street, 3 May, 1823

Received Miss Welsh's Letter, which was "like water to a thirsty soul."—Her talk of "gratitude" is worthy of her; but it is he that ought to feel grateful to her. Hopes to live to thank her as he ought.—About employment for Miss Welsh: hopes for her co-operation in translating "Meister." Advises her to translate Tales from the German; and in the meantime to be merry and cheerful. —Will see her on Monday night, if possible.—Confesses that she is a very hateful character, if he were not prejudiced 206–210

LETTER 55. MISS WELSH—22 George Square, 10 May, 1823

A fine consummation to all our schemes! Obliged to leave Town suddenly, and Carlyle will come to George Square and find her gone. Asks him to muster all his philosophy, for she can spare none of hers.—A thousand things are harassing her mind at present: her Mother's unkindness is not the least of it 210–212

LETTER 56. CARLYLE—3 Moray Street, 11 May, 1823

A text for a sermon on the emptiness of human hopes.—We are parted now, vexatiously enough, but we shall meet again ere long, under happier stars.—Gives Miss Welsh good and wise advice to obey her Mother blithely, even if her conduct appears capricious; tells her not to heed her Nithsdale friends, being nowise dependent on them for anything but kindness. Puts forth his humble claim to share in all that distresses her: the world holds nothing in it for whose fate he is more anxious than hers.—Is determined to set off for a visit to Mainhill.—Will order the

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Book of "Volksmährchen" for her at once.—Counsels her to go on with "Egmont," "Faust," and "Gibbon."—Purposes finishing "Schiller" and translating "Meister."—Will climb Burnswark at sunset and see its red light shining on Miss Welsh's dwelling-place, and think prayers for her welfare 212–217

LETTER 57. CARLYLE—3 Moray Street, 12 May, 1823

Is to start for Mainhill to-morrow morning.—His last Letter from 3 Moray Street.—"My best and kindest of friends, farewell, for a short season!"—Amid all his wanderings, the proudest thought of his heart will be that Miss Welsh thought him worthy of her sympathy . . . 217, 218

LETTER 58. CARLYLE—Kinnaird House, 25 May, 1823

Describes a coach-journey in company of Dr. Fyffe. The lion is king of the forest, but the squirrel leads a merrier life.—Entreats Miss Welsh to be scrupulously careful of her health. Often feels that he will yet join hands with her in perfect happiness.—Describes his new quarters at Kinnaird. Here will Jane's Letters be perused, and many foolish but delightful thoughts about her be entertained.—"Both of us have a thousand faults, but we are both true-hearted people." Promises Miss Welsh a copy of "Bridekirk's Hunting" 219–223

LETTER 59. CARLYLE—Kinnaird House, 11 June, 1823

Receives a letter from Miss Welsh, which was worth waiting a twelvemonth for.—Gives her advice about discarding an unacceptable lover.—Sorry that she finds so little worthy of her in Dumfriesshire.—Kindly reference to Dr. Welsh; asks that he may be allowed to unite with her in cherishing his memory.—Finished reading "Musäus," and is beginning "Meister."—Has been sick and sleepless; but is now recovering 224–230

LETTER 60. CARLYLE—Kinnaird House, 1 July, 1823

Appreciation of Musäus. Finds in him a light, good-natured strain of sarcasm which reminds him of Miss Welsh.—

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Recommends her to begin translation from Musäus at once, to work regularly and in moderation.—Tells her that nothing but literature will make her life agreeable or useful; that the career of a fine-lady would not satisfy her.—Ridicules the notion that she has no genius.—His life at Kinnaird unprofitable and inane: his tutorial duties keep him from literary work.—In the darkest hour some hope still gilds his horizon when he thinks of her. United in the noblest pursuits, or separated for ever, Miss Welsh and he will remember each other with affection and respect, and regard these dreams of their youth as the fairest portions of their history . . . 230–238

Letter 61. Carlyle—Kinnaird House, 4 July, 1823

Is going home for a month's holiday. Petitions to be allowed to see Miss Welsh at Haddington, if she has come home.—The glorious fact that she is his friend is as dear to him as his creed is to a bigot.—Some great revolution must take place in his history ere long.—Forebodings and hopes: one thing is certain, he *will* love Miss Welsh till the last breath of his life, come of it what may . . . 238–242

Letter 62. Miss Welsh—Southwick, Galloway, 15 July, 1823

Fears that Carlyle will think her an ungrateful correspondent.—Hindered from writing by being hurried away to Southwick into the wildest part of Galloway.—Returns to Templand—that eternal Templand—to-morrow.—Is leading a life that would have driven Job out of his wits.—Will write more decently in a few days . . 242–245

Letter 63. Carlyle—Mainhill, 18 July, 1823

Writes from Mainhill.—Delighted to get a Letter from Miss Welsh, which came after long delay, like the dove to Noah's Ark, showing that the Earth was not yet quite ruined.—Thanks Miss Welsh for her gift of a book to his little Sister Jane. Tells Miss Welsh that "we too shall have our day of triumph." Gives her encouragement, and says that he is satisfied with her progress.—Warns

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her against too much abstraction from the affairs of this warm, variegated world 246–250

Letter 64. Miss Welsh—Templand, 21 July, 1823

Half-demented with the confusions of Templand; if no alteration for the better takes place, Carlyle may expect to hear of her being drowned in the Nith or hanged in her garters. Prays the good Lord to deliver her, for she is sore afflicted.—Spent a wretched week in Galloway. Employments.—"O Plato, what tasks for a philosopher!" —Sees Benjamin B. at Dumfries, but dared not make the slightest attempt to draw his attention.—Gives an account of her Father's last illness.—Longs to be home again.—Wrote to Edward Irving some months ago, but he has vouchsafed no reply.—Asks Carlyle for a copy of "Bridekirk's Hunting," and thanks him for a beautiful little "Tacitus" 251–255

Letter 65. Carlyle—Mainhill, 28 July, 1823

Sends a copy of "Bridekirk's Hunting" for Mrs. Welsh, and gives some account of the old Hunting-catch. Advises Miss Welsh not to drown herself in the Nith, or anywhere else, till she see further about her. Is beginning to wish her home again, but thinks she need not repine much for all the harm that has yet been done. No one ever got his whole time consecrated to worthy pursuits. Much may be done, even under difficulties: think of Cowper, Dr. Johnson, Milton, Hooker.—Refers feelingly to her Father as having been her most faithful and disinterested counsellor. Her own judgment, fast coming to maturity, is the next best, and will never wilfully deceive her.—She will learn to surmount or evade obstacles that thwart her. —Has prophesied her complete success a hundred times, and still prophesies it more undoubtingly than ever . 256–259

Letter 66. Carlyle—Mainhill, 10 August, 1823

Just leaving Mainhill for Kinnaird.—Begs Miss Welsh to write to him more frequently than ever.—Longs for her presence, or any emblem of it, more than for aught in the world

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beside.—Can never make himself believe that their correspondence will last, as he knows their affection will—Heartily wishes her home again, and at work on Musäus.—"Forward! Forward! Let us both press towards the mark with unwearied perseverance; we shall both be happy, and by each other's means."—Marriage of Edward Irving.—His popularity in London. His happiness in having a task that he is equal to.—"When shall you and I make an onslaught on the empire of Dulness and bring back *spolia opima* to dedicate to one another?" 259–264

LETTER 67. MISS WELSH—Hell [Templand], 19 August, 1823

Ready to hang or drown herself in good earnest; but the sight of Carlyle's handwriting can cheat her out of ill-humour at any time. Is consoled by his Letters, and owes to him feelings and sentiments that ennoble her character, and give dignity, interest, and enjoyment to her life; and, in return, she can only love him, and *that* she does from the bottom of her heart.—Mocking reference to Irving.—Asks Carlyle, "When shall a world know your worth as I do?" Is sure his genius will burst through all obstructions and find its proper place.—It is good of Carlyle to say that her Letters give him pleasure. For her part she would not thank any one for Letters so full of self, and a self that is eternally in the dismals. Carlyle is the only living soul that seems to understand her. 265–269

LETTER 68. CARLYLE—Kinnaird House, 31 August, 1823

Felt in reading Miss Welsh's last Letter again and again, as if it were more to him than the charter to all the metal of Potosi. Is it true that the most enchanting creature he has ever seen does actually love him? Alas, his fate is dreary, obscure, and perilous: is it fit that she whom he honours as among the fairest of God's works, whom he loves more dearly than his own soul, should partake in it? Tells Miss Welsh to think of him as one that will live and die to do her service, but whom it is dangerous and useless for her to love. If he were intellectual sovereign of all

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the world!—Advises her to get "Musäus" from Haddington, and begin translating.—For her, he is still a prophet of good, not evil.—Is in ill-health and unhappy at Kinnaird. Going on with "Meister," some parts of which are very stupid and all difficult to translate. "Work, work, my heroine! There is nothing but toil, toil, toil,—till we reach the golden, glowing summit,—and then!—!" 269–274

LETTER 69. MISS WELSH—Haddington, 16 September, 1823

Takes umbrage at Carlyle's last Letter.—He has misunderstood her—She might have foreseen that such implicit confidence as hers might mislead him as to the nature of her sentiments. She loves him, loves him, but will never be his Wife.—His friendship almost necessary to her existence, yet she will resign it, cost what it may, if it can only be enjoyed at the risk of his future peace . . 275–277

LETTER 70. CARLYLE—Kinnaird House, 18 September, 1823

Honours Miss Welsh's wisdom and decision; she has put their mutual concerns *on the very footing where he wished them to stand.* "You love me as a sister, and will not wed; I love you in all possible senses, and will not wed any more than you." He seeks no engagement, and will make none, but will love her with all his heart and all his soul, while the blood continues warm within him.—Will help her and stand by her closer than a brother. Let these feelings be their own reward, or go unrewarded.—Longs to be again introduced to her home, to share in all her tasks and difficulties, to cherish her fainting hopes, and tell her that she is dearer to him than aught in life, and that united, they will conquer every difficulty.—Will leave Kinnaird, if his health does not improve.—Going on with "Meister" 277–282

LETTER 71. CARLYLE—Kinnaird House, 12 October, 1823

Receives a delightful Letter from Miss Welsh. Her Letters are always to him "like dew on the mown grass." Says,

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it would be little less than impious to renounce this heavenly feeling that unites them. Might not each go round the planet, vainly seeking for a heart he could love so well?—Seems to have found in Miss Welsh another and nobler self. Her character is the *ideal beauty* of his mind, which he could almost worship, if he had not dared to love it. Is determined to love her more and more every day he lives. The idea of his noble Jane illuminates and cheers the desolation of his thoughts, as with the light of a summer's dawn. They will never part.—Death of her Grandfather: reflections thereon.—Her illness.—Conjures her to beware of excess in study.—Is in better health himself, and has hopes of coming off victorious.—Translation a weary business, but helps to still the conscience. Part I. of the "Life of Schiller" actually printed 283–289

LETTER 72. MISS WELSH—Haddington, 14 October, 1823

Almost out of her wits with joy that she and Carlyle are invited to spend a whole summer together in London as the guests of Edward Irving and his Wife.—Cannot read Carlyle's Letters without weeping.—Wishes he were done with "Meister": would rather see him working the precious mines of his own heart and soul . . . 290–293

LETTER 73. CARLYLE—Kinnaird House, 22 October, 1823

The prospect of spending three months with Miss Welsh is a blessed vision. But alas! there are difficulties in the way.—Miss Welsh must decide the matter herself after hearing all he will tell her. On the whole, she at least ought to go. Will himself escort her to London, and if he cannot stay with her, he will return and bring her back.—His conversation with Irving on the proposed visit to London.—Irving's mind improved but little. Danger of his becoming a turgid rather than a grand character. Loves Irving with all his nonsense, and was *wae* to part with him. Advice to Miss Welsh about translating.—Asks her to tell him everything: he is never satiated with hearing his *other self* 294–301

LETTER 74. MISS WELSH—Haddington, 12 November, 1823

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Has been nearer heaven since Carlyle heard from her, than she wishes to be again for some two score years to come. —She and her Mother attacked by furious colds. Is better now, but has still to wear a cap.—Is sure, without hearing more, that Carlyle is not to go to London with her.—If it be true that experience teacheth fools wisdom, then she is no fool, for it has taught her no such thing. Does not care whether she goes or not, if Carlyle is not going.—The Fates are against "Libussa" . . . 301–303

LETTER 75. CARLYLE—Kinnaird House, 13 November, 1823

Commiserates Miss Welsh on her illness.—Conjures her to be doubly careful of her precious health. Hopes that her Mother will nurse her and force her to take care of herself.—Reminds her that she had on a cap the first time he saw her.—Is convinced that she is not happy; counsels her not to take the business of life so heavily on her.—Her very diffidence is fresh evidence of the generous power that lies in the faculties of her head and heart. "Genius is ever a secret to itself." "They that meaned at a gowden gown, got aye the sleeve."—Is coming to Edinburgh in about three weeks. Part II. of "Schiller" not much more than half done.—"Goethe" has been dormant for five weeks.—Has stipulated with the Bullers for leave to be in Edinburgh, from February till May 304–310

LETTER 76. CARLYLE—35 Bristo Street, Edinburgh, 29 November, 1823

Has come to Edinburgh on business. Will go out to Haddington whenever Miss Welsh sends him a *safe-conduct.* Asks her, the *Lovely Damsel of many Devices,* to put her skill in force on this occasion. Sends a copy of Edward Irving's mock Trial 310–312

LETTER 77. MISS WELSH—Haddington, 30 November, 1823

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Asks Carlyle to mount his Bucephalus and come.—Complains of her Mother's ill-humour. Tempted to run away and push her fortune in distant parts 312, 313

LETTER 78. CARLYLE—Kinnaird House, 22 December, 1823

Discomforts at Kinnaird.—Ill effects of the Edinburgh Doctor's prescriptions. Is merely driving away the time till February come, smothering every sparkle of ambition within him.—Anxiety about Miss Welsh.—Looking on the dark side of the picture, both as regards himself and her.—End of Letter lost 314–316

LETTER 79. MISS WELSH—Haddington, 30 December, 1823

Satisfaction on receiving Carlyle's last letter. Was fearing that she had lost his affection, at least in part. "The Fates are against us, my dear Friend." Thinks that Carlyle may fight it out to the end; feels that she has "no genius," and prophesies that her ambition will be borne down at last by the difficulties that oppose its gratification.—Has been very ill for three weeks, and unable to work.—Her Mother grown kinder to her, and must be allowed to read Carlyle's Letters . . 316–320

LETTER 80. CARLYLE—Kinnaird House, 8 January, 1824

Been unable to work till within the last three days. "Schiller" (Part III.) to be called for within a fortnight.—No danger of Miss Welsh ever losing his affection—Rejoices to hear of her new facilities for study, and the general accession of comfort which she has acquired lately.—Counsels her not to dissociate herself from all society: one should have company, "Be not solitary, be not idle."—Believes she will not be perfect till her ambition is considerably

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lessened. Literary fame, at the best, is by no means the most enviable thing for man or woman.—She must not regret too vehemently her small proficiency and the flight of time.—Predicts that Jane Welsh will yet be an honour to her sex and country.—Is coming down to Edinburgh in February, when "Meister" is to go to press . 321–326

LETTER 81. MISS WELSH—22 George Square, Edinburgh, 21 January, 1824

Has been brought to Edinburgh for restoration of her health. —Her new system of study thrown into confusion. Will try to work a little.—Her Mother continues to use her kindly.—Quarrel with Dr. Fyffe: defended Carlyle against the Doctor, who "ruffled up like a bantam about to fight" 326–329

LETTER 82. CARLYLE—Kinnaird House, 25 January, 1824

Tells Miss Welsh that the sight of her handwriting never fails, even in his most lugubrious humours, to dispel the dark shadows from his mind, and replace them with images of happiness and hope.—On her quarrel with Dr. Fyffe.—Begs her to be careful of her health, and above all, never to let the slowness of her intellectual progress disturb her: life is short, but not so short as her fancy paints it. *Festina lente* is the motto: you make the greatest speed that way.—Is never absent from Miss Welsh a week, till he is longing to see her again . . . 329–333

LETTER 83. CARLYLE—1 Moray Street, Edinburgh, 8 February, 1824

Arrived in Edinburgh.—Would like to see Miss Welsh: five minutes spent beside her, is worth something under all embarrassments.—Must be dreadfully busy with "Meister."—"Schiller" nearly killed him, but it is done now.—Asks her to write under cover to his brother at 35 Bristo Street 333, 334

LETTER 84. MISS WELSH—22 George Square, 29 February, 1824

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Regrets and apologies for her behaviour to Carlyle at their last meeting.—Believes that the Devil tempted her to be absurd and ill-humoured at the outset, and was aggravated by Carlyle's imperturbable patience. Offers more liberal terms of reconciliation than she ever offered to mortal man before 334, 335

LETTER 85. CARLYLE—1 Moray Street, 7 March, 1824

Bending under the weight of "Meister," like an Ass between two dust-panniers.—Noticed Miss Welsh's sarcastic looks in the coach, and expected her new sally on his *genius*.—Thinks it a pity she has abandoned "Gibbon." Recommends other books to read. Fears she is again working too long hours. Four hours daily is more than one literary man in a thousand gets bestowed on purely intellectual operations.—Sends her the remaining sheets of "Meister." Criticism on the Book: "What a work! Bushels of dust and straws and feathers, with here and there a diamond of the purest water!"—Is determined to spend a month in Annandale; hopes to be there in three weeks.—Negotiations with Boyd about "Meister" . . . 336–342

LETTER 86. MISS WELSH—Haddington, 14 March, 1824

Appreciation of Carlyle's kindness to her. Hopes that she may some day or other deserve it.—Again apologises for her behaviour to him on "that unblessed day." "Woe to me then, if I had had any other than the most constant and generous of mortal men to deal with. Blessings on your equanimity and magnanimity!"—For *two whole weeks* she has adhered to her new system of study.—Long account of the Haddington Medical squabble: clever parody of "Tacitus."—Her plans to avoid the calling people, whose most vile voices she values not a straw.—Her Mother highly pleased with Carlyle's last Letter 342–346

LETTER 87. CARLYLE—1 Moray Street, 22 March, 1824

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Sends more sheets of "Meister" to Miss Welsh.—Was never so hurried in his life, yet will have an hour's talk with her, betide what may.—Has very *nearly* forgiven her, even to the heart's core, for that "unblessed" day's work. "Some demon more wicked than his Wife."—Counsels Miss Welsh to walk forward in that steady way, neither loitering nor overtasking herself: "Slow fire does make sweet malt."—Vision of Dr. Fyffe fighting a duel with Dr. L.—Boyd's terms for the translation of "Meister."—Says Miss Welsh will not like the second volume of "Meister" a jot better than she did the first. Asks her to pause in her judgment.—Walter Dunlop—Pearce Gillies.—Is growing a very Irving in love . . 346–350

LETTER 88. MISS WELSH—Haddington, 4 April, 1824

Complains of too frequent and long-protracted tea-parties. Nothing less than Fate shall interfere with the six hours she has set apart for reading.—Devoutly wishes Carlyle were done with "Meister"; likes ill to see his fine genius engaged in such a service.—Would rather be able to make £180 by her wits than fall heir to a million.—Perplexed by the unaccountable propensity to kissing, which runs through all the *dramatis personæ* of "Meister."—Has a notion that Mignon is to die of eating sticks.—Visit from her Aunt Grace, who is jealous of her.—Translating the Legends of Rübezahl.—Reading "Charles V." and the "Maid of Orleans" 350–354

LETTER 89. CARLYLE—Mainhill, 15 April, 1824

Congratulates Miss Welsh on her long spell of study. Tells her the great point is constancy of moderate exertion. There is no peace for her except in vigorous endeavour: "The end of man is an action not a thought."—Recommends historical works for her reading.—Advises her to be tolerant of her Aunt Grace.—Appreciation of "Meister."

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Tells Miss Welsh that she will like Goethe better ten years hence.—Translation *versus* original composition; the former cool and quiet, the latter an agitating, fiery, consuming business.—Moderately happy at Mainhill: rough substantial plenty and heart-felt kindness from all. "Better is affection in the smoke of a turf cottage than indifference amidst the tapestries of palaces." His own mountains: Skiddaw, Helvellyn, Hartfell and Whitecomb are more to him than St. Gothard or Mont Blanc. Often pictures Jane and her Mother in their bright home, sometimes thinking of him, cheering this dull earth for him with a distant spot of life and kindliness . 354–359

Letter 90. Miss Welsh—Haddington, 29 April, 1824

Forced into idleness by visitors; discomposed and dispirited, but Carlyle's Letter set all to rights again. Not the first time his words have worked a beneficial revolution in her mind. Has often been roused by them out of listlessness and dejection into ardour, activity, and hope.—Is still in the Fifth Legend of "Rübezahl."—Is longing for Carlyle's coming.—Dr. Fyffe and his new "white hat."—Not a word from the Orator: Irving has lost a *friend*, she merely a few weeks' amusement. No one but Irving's self could have made her believe him so fickle and heartless.—Her Mother in raptures with Carlyle and his Letters 360–362

Letter 91. Carlyle—Mainhill, 19 May, 1824

Finished the translation of "Meister" about ten days ago. The Preface for it still to be written.—Is to be in Edinburgh on Tuesday afternoon.—Hopes to spend a *day in peace* with Miss Welsh; would spend all his days beside her, if it suited.—Edward Irving: his shortcomings, the fund of goodness in his heart and real talent in his head. Has had a short Letter from Irving, a third of which is devoted to Miss Welsh.—News of Byron's death; had dreamed of seeing and knowing him, but the curtain of everlasting night has hid him from our eyes . . 363–367

LETTER 92. MISS WELSH—Haddington, 20 May, 1824

PAGES

In great anxiety to hear from Carlyle, fearing he is in trouble, or tired of her.—Has had a Letter from Irving, telling her that Thomas Carlyle is to be with him this month.—Reminds Carlyle that he promised to be in Haddington before he went to London, in words that it would be impiety to doubt. Is out of all patience with Irving: "What an idiot I was ever to think that man so estimable."—Ever since hearing that Byron was dead, she has felt quite cold and dejected: all her thoughts have been fearful and dismal 367–369

LETTER 93. MISS WELSH—Haddington, 25 May, 1824

Irritated at Carlyle for not having written sooner. Not a disaster under heaven that she has not imagined. He must not frighten her so again, if he can help it.—"May he come!" Has she not been telling him to come, for the last three months?—Thanks God that she has Carlyle again: Byron's death made her tremble for all that she admires and loves 369, 370

LETTER 94. CARLYLE—1 Moray Street, 27 May, 1824

He never knew till now that Miss Welsh was such an adept at scolding. She is in truth a charming scold.—Will come to see her on Friday night.—To-day, revised the last proofs of the Preface to "Meister."—Had such a fight to-day, with Brewster and a Gothic German, for the memory of our poor Byron 370–372

LETTER 95. CARLYLE—1 Moray Street, 5 June, 1824

Snatches a moment to send his Dearest another farewell.—Has not had a merry hour since he parted from her. Is like a man fallen from the third heaven down among the meanness of vulgar earth. Entreats Miss Welsh to remain true to him and to herself, and assures her that it

PAGES

will all be well.—Is to leave Edinburgh for London, in a sailing smack at eight to-night.—Has a Letter for Thomas Campbell from Brewster, and for various *Savants*.—Sends Miss Welsh a copy of Shakespear. Tells her to read Milton and the histories regularly.—Begs her to be attentive and daughter-like to her Mother.—Much, much of the happiness of his existence depends on Miss Welsh, but he knows in whom he has confided.—Presses her to his bosom, and prays that God may keep for him what is more to him than all things else 372–374

LETTER 96. CARLYLE—Kew Green, London, 23 June, 1824

Had the most melancholy sail to London,—cross winds, storms and dead calms.—Companions, Sir D—— I——, Captain Smith, and Monsieur Dubois. But time and hours wear out the roughest day. Reaches Tower Wharf next Friday at Noon. Sees sights which formed the grandest object he had ever witnessed.—The good Orator and his "dear Isabella" welcomed him with cordial words and looks. Finds the Orator mended since he saw him at Dunkeld; counsels Miss Welsh not to cast Irving quite away: as men go, there are few that even approach him in true worth, deducting all his faults.—Has seen some notable characters, Mrs. Montagu, Procter, Allan Cunningham, Thomas Campbell.—The image of his own dearest *Original* is never far from him. Visions of her and Haddington scenes come before his eyes with the clearness of paintings 375–380

LETTER 97. MISS WELSH—Bridge of Earn, 1 July, 1824

Impatient waiting for Carlyle's Letter. Threatens to retaliate, but hasn't the heart to cause him voluntarily a moment's pain.—Her old enemy, headache, has been playing the Deuce with her and "Rübezahl" almost ever since Carlyle went away.—In the Green-room of the Theatre with Marianne Paton.—Asks Carlyle to tell her more about the geniuses in London. He may expect a tremendous Letter from her when she returns home 380–383

LETTER 98. CARLYLE—Birmingham, 22 July, 1824

PAGES

His ideas cannot rest, for nothing about him or his fortunes rests. The Wandering Jew was but a type of him.—Has bidden farewell to Kew and the Bullers. Is now the guest of Dr. John Badams, who promises to cure him of dyspepsia, or at least, to alleviate his curse. Great friendliness of Badams; his methods of treatment.—His "Life of Schiller" to be enlarged and published in Book form.—Wishes that Miss Welsh were in London. Words are feeble to express the anxieties he sometimes feels on her account. Her spirit the noblest he has yet found among women; and she is still uninstructed, even unconvinced of her highest duties. Asks her if she will waste such endowments as Nature bestows only on her favourites, one among many millions. Charges her to be up and doing, to resist evil influences and forward the good.—Begs that she will forgive Edward Irving, and procure his pardon from her Mother: the man has many follies, but there is true blood in his heart.—"Meister" growing a small, very small *lion* in London.—Tells her that "Rübezahl" has been already translated into English 383–388

LETTER 99. MISS WELSH—Haddington, 11 August, 1824

Declares that Carlyle is indeed her Guardian Spirit, and that she will never forget or separate herself from him while she retains her senses.—The Tragi-comedy of Dugald G., related amusingly and at great length.—Her heart is softened towards that vexatious Orator, by what Carlyle has said of him.—Sometimes she thinks it possible that she may go to London after all 388–395

LETTER 100. CARLYLE—Birmingham, 12 August, 1824

Impatient and anxious at not hearing from Miss Welsh.—Means not to languish in the pastoral style, however.—Suggests that she should get "Schillers Gedichte" and translate some passages for insertion in his "Life of Schiller." Recommends for this purpose "Hero and

PAGES

Leander," and the "Alpenlied." Has set his heart on it that something of hers must and shall be in this Book. —Has firmly resolved that her mind shall not run to waste, but come forth in its native beauty, before all is done, and let the world behold it.—There is not another soul alive that wishes with such earnestness to see her the good and perfect, the lovely and graceful and wise and dignified woman it is in her power to be.—Dr. Badams's vigorous treatment. Galloping two hours on a fiery hunter before breakfast.—Asks Miss Welsh to tell him everything in her dear, *chatting* style. There is nothing in life like one of her right Letters 395–400

ILLUSTRATIONS

JANE WELSH AS A GIRL (*In Colour*) . . *Frontispiece*

From a Miniature which used to hang in the drawing-room at 24 Cheyne Row, now in possession of the Editor

BIRTHPLACE OF JANE WELSH . . . *To face p.* 2

From a Photograph by GEO. G. NAPIER, *showing the back or garden view of Dr. Welsh's house at Haddington, now called "Carlyle House"*

MAINHILL (DISTANT VIEW) . . . . . ,, 10

From a Photograph by JOHN PATRICK, *Edinburgh*

CARLYLE, ÆT. 36 . . . . . ,, 30

From a Drawing by DANIEL MACLISE, R.A., *now in the South Kensington Museum (Forster Collection). Done in February, 1832, for "Fraser's Magazine." (See "Letters of Thomas Carlyle," ii. 25, 108.)*

RIVER NITH AND AULDGIRTH BRIDGE . . ,, 252

From a Photograph by JOHN COWAN. *The view shows the Bridge which Carlyle's father helped to build. (See "Reminiscences," i. 35.)*

DR. WELSH . . . . . ,, 254

From a Miniature in possession of the Editor

TEMPLAND . . . . . ,, 264

From a Photograph by JOHN PATRICK. *This was the home of Walter Welsh, Miss Welsh's maternal grandfather; also of Mrs. Welsh from 1826 till her death in 1842*

EDWARD IRVING . . . . . ,, 292

From a Photograph which hung in Carlyle's dressing-room at the time of his death

MRS. WELSH . . . . . ,, 346

From a Miniature in possession of the Editor

THE LOVE LETTERS OF THOMAS CARLYLE AND JANE WELSH—I

THE LOVE LETTERS OF THOMAS CARLYLE AND JANE WELSH

Letter I

THIS is Carlyle's first Letter to Miss Welsh: it was written only four days after his return to Edinburgh from his first call on Mrs. Welsh and her Daughter at Haddington, the County Town of East Lothian. In a Letter to his Brother Alexander, dated 8th June, 1821, Carlyle writes: "Irving was with me lately, during the General Assembly time. The man could not have been kinder to me, had he been a brother. He would needs take me to East Lothian with him for a day or two, to 'see the world.' We went accordingly; . . . I was happy as a lark in May. We returned last Thursday. I can say little about their husbandry . . . but for the people — I saw the finest sample in the world. There was Gilbert Burns, brother of that immortal ploughman, 'that walked in glory on the mountain-side, behind his team'; there was — But no sheet (much less *this*) can be enough for them. I came back so full of joy, that I have done nothing since but dream of it."[1] And in his "Reminiscences," written more than forty-five years after the event, he says in reference to this East Lothian excursion: "It was in one of those visits by Irving himself, without any company, that he took me out to Haddington (as recorded elsewhere), to what has since been so momentous through all my subsequent life! We walked and talked, — a good sixteen miles, in the sunny summer after-

[1] "Early Letters," i. 352–3.

noon. . . . This is nearly all I recollect of the journey: the end of it, and what I saw *there*, will be memorable to me while life or thought endures."[1]

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

EDINBURGH, ROBERTSON'S LODGINGS,
16 Carnegie Street, 4 June, 1821.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — If, on opening this paper, you expect to find any trace of that much vaunted *list*, you are about to be somewhat disappointed. Since quitting East Lothian, I have been so little in a condition to collect my ideas, or think seriously about anything; and it seems withal so presumptuous in me to act as your tutor at present, — that really you must excuse me for a while. Besides, unless Fortune treat me even worse than usual, I am destined in process of time to know you far more intimately, and so to become far better qualified for contributing advantageously what little is mine to your improvement. Any way, you cannot be at a loss for employment till winter. Robertson and Hume (to be studied with the aid of maps and chronologies, and so forth); Watson's Philip II. and Philip III.; Russell's Modern Europe; Voltaire's pretty little histories; with occasional excursions in the company of Tasso and De Staël, — will amply fill up the summer, and very profitably also. Observe you are not to read *much:* not for the gallant Captain's reason;[2] but because it will

[1] "Reminiscences," ii. 85–6 (Norton's ed.). Readers are recommended to re-peruse the "Romance" chapter of "Sartor Resartus" (Bk. ii. ch. 5). See also Appendix B, Note One *infra*.

[2] The "gallant Captain" is most probably the "Philistine" of "Sartor Resartus," who was one of the company present at the

BIRTHPLACE OF JANE WELSH

prejudice your health — which I will not allow you even to endanger on any account.

Noehden's Grammar is not to be found in the whole City: so they have sent to London for it; and I fear you cannot have it in less than three weeks. Be patient, however: should the military musician have "taken a giddiness" and shifted his quarters before that period, I protest I would not give a penny (or rather I *would* give many, many) to come Eastward as far as Haddington myself, and deliver such a lesson on those Saxon Roots as you never heard. Positively, I must see you soon, or I shall get into a very absurd state. And then if I should come to visit Jane herself *professedly*, *what* would Jane say to it? what would Jane's friends say? Would to Heaven some authorized person would "force me to go voluntarily"![1]

But I forget. It is not of my own concerns, it is of yours I have to write at present. And therefore it is time to introduce the Books to your notice, which have caused all this scribbling. The *Germany*,[2] except the first volume, I cannot get, at least for a day or two. The other[3] will perhaps interest you more, at any rate: — there is no hurry in returning either. I hope you will like Madame de Staël. She is misty and inconsistent here and there, it is true; she has none of that sprightliness, that bland

first meeting of Teufelsdröckh and Blumine, and who, it would seem, was declaiming, in not the choicest of English, against the higher education of women, when the "Socratic and other Diogenic utterances" of Teufelsdröckh persuaded "the monster" into silence and early withdrawal for the night.—See *infra*, Appendix B, Notes One and Three.

[1] Phrase of Napoleon Buonaparte.

[2] "De l'Allemagne," by Madame de Staël.

[3] Milton's Poetical Works.

and sparkling wit, which so gracefully adorns the higher qualities of a young lady I once met with: but if a brilliant imagination, a magnificent intellect, a noble heart, can yield you any delight, then here is for you! Professors of Divinity . . . think poor Wilhelmina crazy, — which is all very just and natural.

Now when you have read these volumes, I pray you to consider if it would be quite contrary to law — "clean against rules" (as the creature Dugal phrased it) — to tell me in three words what you think of the Lady de Staël; to say whether her cousin, the Lady Jane, is well and happy; and whether the latter has ever deigned to cast one glance of recollection on those few Elysian hours we spent together lately? Certainly this seems a very simple matter in itself; and taking into view the satisfaction it will confer on a fellow-creature, I do not see how you can spend a half hour better than in performing it. No doubt you may refuse me; you may even forbid me to repeat such questions. But it will be *very* cruel if you do: and even then there will be one inalienable comfort left me — the comfort that, no man woman or child can hinder me to cherish "within the secret cell of the heart," as long and as tenderly as I please, those sentiments of deep and affectionate interest, which I have thought meet to conceive towards you. Here I am a perfect Sultan, as absolute as the Great Solyman himself.

But alas! three o'clock is at hand, and this wonderful compound of pedagogy and sentimentality and absurdity must conclude. Excuse my impertinences. You see I never dream of remembering that, we have not yet been *quite* twenty years ac-

quainted. It seems as if we had known each other from infancy upwards, and I were simply your elder Brother. You would cut me to the quick of the heart, if you took offence at this. But you will not, I know. *Addio Donna mia cara!* [Adieu, my dear lady!]

Faithfully yours,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

My best regards to your kind and hospitable Mother. I could love her for her own sake, and she is *your* Mother.

On returning the books which Carlyle had sent to her, Miss Welsh merely wrote: "To Mr. Carslile, with Miss Welsh's compliments and very best thanks."

LETTER 2

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

EDINBURGH, 28th June, 1821.

MY DEAR MADAM, — It would have been a pleasant spectacle for Mephistopheles or any of his sooty brethren, — in whose eyes, I understand, this restless life of ours appears like a regular Farce, only somewhat dull at times, — to have surveyed my feelings before opening your parcel, the other night, and after opening it: to have seen with what hysterical speed I undid the grey cover; how I turned over the poor tomes; how I shook them, and searched them through and through; and found — Miss Welsh's "compliments" to Mr. Car*slile*, a gentleman, in whom, it required no small sagacity to

detect my own representative! Upon the whole, I suppose, you did well to treat me so. I had dreamed and hoped, indeed; but what right had *I* to hope, or even to wish?

Those latter volumes of the *Allemagne* will perplex you, I fear. The third in particular is very mysterious; now and then quite absurd. Do not mind it much. — Noehden is not come, the London Smacks being all becalmed. I hope it will arrive in time to let us begin Lessing and Schiller and the rest, against October, without impediment. I shall send it out instantly.

I had a hundred thousand things to tell you; but *now* I may not mention one of them. Those *compliments* have put the whole to flight almost entirely: there remains little more than, as it were, a melancholy echo of what has been,

Infantumve animæ flentes in limine primo.[1]

Edward Irving and I go down to Annandale, about the first of August; he for two weeks, I for as many months. In the meantime, if there is any other Book that I can get you, or any kind of service within the very utmost circle of my ability, that can promote your satisfaction even in the slenderest degree, — I do entreat you earnestly to let me know. This is not mere *palabra;* it originates in a *wish* to serve you — which must remain ungratified, I presume, but is not the less heartfelt on that account. Farewell! I am always,

Your affectionate friend,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

[1] Or ghosts of infants weeping just within the porch. —VIRGIL, "Æn.," vi. 427.

Letter 3

Miss Welsh to T. Carlyle

Haddington, 6th July, '1821.'

Dear Sir, — I return your books; and heartily thank you for the pleasure they have afforded me. I fear you think I have kept them long: nevertheless I have not been idle.

I have dismissed my German Master (for the enormous offence of asserting all words beginning with capitals to be the names of towns), and I think I get on faster without him.

Yours truly,

Jane Baillie Welsh.

To Mr. Carslile.[2]

Letter 4

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

Edinburgh, 16th July, 1821.

My dear Madam, — You must not be angry at me for this new intrusion. It is not without great trepidation that I venture on such a step; but I

[1] Single quotation marks are here and elsewhere in this work used to denote that the date, or part of the date, enclosed in them is not given on the original Letter, but is inferred from other sources.

[2] Miss Welsh, like Frederick the Great and some other celebrities, was not strong in orthography. In spite of Carlyle's protest in his last Letter, she again spells his name *Carslile*. In her "Early Letters" she spells the name of the City of Carlisle in the same fashion, remembering that there was a 'silent s' in it somewhere, but putting it in a wrong place.

have conceived the most magnificent project, and your concurrence is absolutely necessary for realising it. My project is no less than, to set out in person to inspect and accelerate your progress in the German tongue! Some sunny morning, about the first of August, you are to find me beside you, at breakfast, when you least expect it. "And where is the *magnificence* of this?" you ask: "Magnificence!" — and then you whisper something about *parturiunt montes* [mountains in travail],[1] and smile most contemptuously on me and my project. Not without reason: but after all, "these little things are great to little men";[2] and besides it is altogether impossible for you to understand with what feelings I look forward to this event. You cannot form any adequate idea of the pleasure I already experience in anticipating the lightness of heart, with which I shall brush away the dews — advancing "right against the Eastern gate"[3] — upon so brave an errand. With the prospect of green fields and fresh air for months before me, with all the sorrowful traffickings, and all the dreary drivelling scioligists of Edinburgh behind, — I shall see you for a few moments, and be happy in your company once again. But alas! will you let me come? Will you be at home then? If you say No, if you do not say Yes, it will dash the whole of this gay Spanish Castle

[1] *Parturiunt montes, nascetur ridiculus mus.* — HORACE, "Ars Poet.," 139. The verse has been translated thus:

> "The mountain labour'd with prodigious throes,
> And, lo! a mouse ridiculous arose."

[2] "These little things are great to little man." — GOLDSMITH'S "Traveller."

[3] "L'Allegro," 59.

to the ground. Can you find in your heart to do so? Can you? Tell me soon: and observe that by way of preliminary, I debar all speeches about *trouble*, and the like: you know well enough it will be no *trouble* whatever it be. Say only "I shall be at home": the news will make one poor mortal richer than any king, — for a while.

I designed to thank you a hundred times for the Letter you honoured me with: but I may wait till *we meet*. In your eyes, I doubt not, that small note seems a very plain prosaic affair, not worthy of thanks above twice at farthest: in mine it appears quite differently. To me the very seal has beauty in it. I have pondered the device with musings of various kinds. And would you not pardon me, if the wish arose among them for a moment that *A l'Amistà* [To Friendship] *were* in very deed the motto, once and evermore between us! The thing itself looks so very delicious, that even this faint fallacious shadow of it has a value. But I am wandering.— To return. *When* will you write to me? To-morrow? Next day? If you knew *all*, you would sit down *instantly*, and say *La Reine le veut*.[1] I do in fact most devoutly entreat you to write, the very first minute you can spare. If you do not, I shall get into a thousand quandaries, about having offended you and so forth, — that any one would pity me, and forget my levities and *impolitesses*, tho' the source of them were deeper than it is. If you were merely "a very accomplished young lady," I would write to you differently, — if I wrote at all. As it is, I somehow think you *understand* me, and

[1] "The Queen wills it." It is the phrase used by the Queen when giving her assent to Bills passed by both Houses of Parliament.

need not to be told with what *respect* as well as affectionateness, I remain,

My dear Madam,
Most sincerely yours,
THOMAS CARLYLE.

Let me beg most humbly that you will not call me Car-*slile* any more. I am sure I would not so misname aught belonging to you, not even your lap-dog Shandy (*qui vivat valeatque!*) [to whom long life and health!], — for any consideration.[1]

LETTER 5

Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

MAINHILL, ECCLEFECHAN,
1st September, 1821.

MY DEAR MADAM, — On again noticing this crabbed hand of mine, I fear you are ready to exclaim with some feelings of surprise and dissatisfaction: "Why troublest thou me?" To this very natural question it were tedious and difficult to make any satisfactory reply. The causes which give motion to my pen at present are too vague and complicated for being discussed in the preface to a single letter; and hardly of importance enough

[1] Miss Welsh's reply to this Letter appears not to have been preserved. It seems uncertain whether Carlyle went to Haddington as he here proposes. He and Miss Welsh did meet soon after this date, but the meeting may have been in Edinburgh. A little before the middle of August, he went home to Mainhill, travelling by Coach to Moffat, where he was met by his Brother Alick with a spare saddle-horse. On the 9th of November following, he dates from 9, Jamaica Street, Edinburgh.

MAINHILL (DISTANT VIEW)

to a second person for being discussed anywhere. Perhaps it is more expedient, as it is certainly easier, to throw myself on your good-nature at once; to supplicate your indulgence if I prove tiresome, your forgiveness if I be so unfortunate as to offend. You know well enough it is far from my intention to do either: and cases are every day arising in which a generous person finds it just to let the innocence of the purpose serve as an excuse for the faultiness of the deed. Upon this principle, if on no other, I entreat you, *be not* angry with me! If you saw into my views properly, I am sure you would not.

The truth is, in this remote district, where so few sensible objects occur to arrest my attention — while I am too sick and indolent to search for intellectual objects — the Imagination is the busiest faculty, and shadows of the past and future, are nearly all I have to occupy myself with. But in the multitude of anticipations and remembrances, it is quite conceivable that your image should be occasionally present with me: and all men love to talk or at least to write on subjects about which they think. Nor is it merely as an absent friend that I contemplate you, and have a kind of claim to converse with you. It is impossible for me, without many *peculiar* emotions, to behold a being like you entering so devotedly upon the path of Letters, which I myself have found to be as full of danger as it is of beauty: and tho' my own progress in it bears but indifferent testimony to my qualifications as a Guide, I may be allowed to offer you the result of my experience, such as it is, and to pronounce the "Good-speed!" which I wish you in silence so frequently and so cordially.

I am not now going to depreciate your studies, or tease you with advices to abandon them. I said enough on that side of the question when we were together last; and stupidly, as native dulness, aggravated by a sleepless week, and the fat contented presence of Mr. B——, could make me say it: and after all I believe my habitual opinion is not of that sort. To me those pursuits have been the source of much disquiet; but also of some enviable enjoyment: if they have added a darker shade to the gloom of my obscure destiny, I ought not to forget that here and there they have chequered it with a ray of heavenly brightness, which seemed to make amends for all. The case is similar with every one that follows literature: it increases our sensibility to pleasure as well as pain; it enlarges the circle of objects capable of affecting us; and thus at once deepens and diversifies the happiness and the misery of our life. The latter in a higher ratio, I fear: yet here it is often blamed unjustly; there are perturbed souls to whose unrest it gives direction rather than existence: and tho' the charge were altogether just, what could be made of it? Happiness is not our final aim in this world, or poor Shandy would be the finest character in the nation. It is the complete developement of our faculties — the increase in capacity as sentient and thinking creatures that constitutes the first want: and as mental excellence — to think well and feel nobly — is doubtless the highest of all attainments, so the mental nourishment which literature affords, as richly as any object of human activity, should stand among the foremost of our desires. Nourishment of any kind may, indeed, by injudicious application, be converted into poison;

and mental nourishment forms no exception to the rule. But if its *abuse* may lead to isolation from our brethren, and to every species of wretchedness, its prudent *use* does not of necessity exclude from any other source of happiness. Often it is true, the studious man wanders in solitude over rocky and tempestuous regions: but sometimes a lovely scene will strike his eye as well as that of another, and touch him more keenly than it does another: — some sweet sequestered dale, embosomed calmly among the barren mountains of life, — so verdant and smiling and balmy — so like a home and resting-place for the wearied spirit, that even the sight of it is happiness: to *reach* it would be too much; would bring Eden back again into the world, and make Death to be indeed, what cowards have named him, the enemy of man. — Oh! that it lay with me to show you the means of securing all the benefits to be found in such pursuits, without any of the harm! But it may not be. The law of our existence is that good and evil are inseparable always: the heart that can taste of rapture must taste of torment also, and find the elements of both in all things it engages with. Nevertheless I counsel you to persevere. In your advantages natural and accidental, there exist the materials of a glorious life; and if in cultivating the gifts of your mind, you can but observe the *Golden mean*, which it is so easy to talk of, so difficult to find — if in striving after what is great and productive of honour, you do not *too* widely deviate from what is common and productive of comfort — the result will not still be unmixed, but I shall join with thousands in rejoicing at it. The hazard is great, the alternative appalling; but I augur *well.*

My sheet is done while my subject is scarce begun. Shall I not have another opportunity to enter on it? I still entertain a *firm trust* that you are to read Schiller and Goethe with me in October. I never yet met with any to relish their beauties; and sympathy is the very soul of life.

This letter is amazingly stupid. It is enough if it recall to your memory, without displeasure, one who desires your welfare in every sense as honestly as he can desire anything.

Your sincere friend,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

LETTER 6

Miss Welsh's reply to the foregoing Letter, No. 5, has not been preserved. There is, however, evidence to show that Carlyle's "firm trust" that he and Miss Welsh were "to read Schiller and Goethe" together was realised, in part at least, some time in the autumn, tho' not "in October," for Carlyle did not arrive in Edinburgh (from Mainhill) until early in November. That they did meet,[1] however, and that Carlyle superintended her studies, is proved by what Miss Welsh writes at the close of Letter 8 (January, 1822): "Here I am Jane Welsh, in Edinburgh I was Mr. Carlyle's Pupil." The total absence of Letters during this period seems to afford evidence that the young people had other means of communication. How long Miss Welsh continued to be Carlyle's Pupil on this occasion, cannot now be ascertained. In "Sartor Resartus" Carlyle says of Teufelsdröckh and Blumine, "In Town they met again: day after day, like his heart's sun, the blooming Blumine shone on

[1] Their place of meeting was 22 George Square, Edinburgh, the private residence of Mr. John Bradfute (of Messrs. Bell & Bradfute, Booksellers, Bank Street), whose niece, Miss Eliza Stodart, was Miss Welsh's early friend and correspondent.

him." But the happy weeks could not have been many; for "this fairest of Orient Light-bringers" had again returned to the East before the end of the year, since the following Letter is dated "Haddington, Saturday," and bears the Post-mark, "2 January, 1822."

It appears that Carlyle had exacted from Miss Welsh, before her departure for home, a promise to write to him. She fulfils her promise, but with fear and trembling (real or simulated); for her mother, who had at first been very favourable to Carlyle, had by this time changed her mind (as she too often did), and become unfriendly towards him and jealous of his attentions to her daughter. Miss Welsh, however, had a mind of her own, and was not disposed to sacrifice her friendship and admiration for Carlyle to her Mother's whim.

Miss Welsh to T. Carlyle, Cusine's Lodgings, 5, College Street, Edinburgh

HADDINGTON, Saturday, '29th Dec., 1821.'
[Post-mark, 2 January, 1822.]

CHANCE seems leagued with conscience in preventing me from writing to you. My Mother has been beside me this whole day; and to sit down to deceive her before her very face required more audacity than I possess. Even now she is gone for a few minutes only, and should she return and ask me who I am writing to! . . . You say there is no harm in our correspondence; and I believe it. But assuredly there is harm in disobedience and deceit, — the only means thro' which it can at present be maintained. And is it for you who profess to be my friend, to teach me these? Is it for you who talk of generosity so well, to require of me the sacrifice of my own esteem to your selfish gratification? What have you done for me to merit such a sacri-

fice? What proofs of regard have you given me, greater than I can command from any fool who comes in my way? My Friend, before you draw so largely on my gratitude, do something for my sake. Render your friendship as honourable in the eyes of the world, to my Father's child, as it is already honourable in her own eyes to Jane Welsh, and then you may *exact* as your *due* favours you have as yet no *claim* to *ask*. Oh, Mr. Carlyle, if you wish me to admire — to love you (admiration and love is with me the same feeling) use as you ought your precious time and the noble powers that God has given you, and waste no hours or thoughts on *me*. And do not laugh at fame. It is indeed a name, perhaps an empty name; but yet it is the object of no low ambition, and ambition is the crime of no low soul.

I will not write again. Do not urge me, lest you wear out my patience and with it my esteem. You may think it unlikely *that* should ever happen; as you have sometimes found me weak and thoughtless, you may expect to find me always so. But there are moments when the weak are strong, when the thoughtless think, and such moments are more frequent with me than you suppose.

When you have finished your review of *Faustus*,[1] send it to me with such a letter as my Mother may read without anger. And when you have written four-and-twenty pages of your Book, bring them.

I have nothing more to say, and you will not be satisfied with this; but I cannot help it. I dare write no longer. I am as nervous as if I were committing a murder, and my ideas like my pen

[1] A critique on Goethe's "Faust," published in the short-lived "New Edinburgh Review," for April, 1822.

are dancing about at such a rate I cannot stay them. God bless you. Do your duty; let me do mine; and leave the rest to Destiny.

Your sincere Friend,

JANE BAILLIE WELSH.

P. S. I know not how I shall get this to the post-office. As I never go out, my going today voluntarily would excite surprise. What a Purgatory you have placed me in!

LETTER 7

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

3, MORAY-STREET, LEITH-WALK, MRS. WILKIE'S,
Monday, 3 o'clock, '14 Jany., 1822.'

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I finished Faust on Saturday; and have not yet had courage to read it over. Nothing but the pleasure, which I am now anticipating, and for which it furnishes a kind of pretext, could have induced me to submit so very insufficient a performance to your perusal. I declare I cannot without indignation behold the paltry rag, and think that it has consumed two whole weeks of incessant labour. It is so ambitious, so bombastic, so jejune. Do not look at it, till you feel in very good-humour with me, and then banish it from your memory altogether.

I suppose you think I have been very idle since you left me. But no, I promise you! I was not born to be anything but miserable in idleness; and by the blessing of Heaven, I shall never be idle more. If I fail to effect anything in my day and generation, anything to justify Providence for having

called me into his Universe, — the weakness of my ability not of my will shall be to blame. I have much to strive with, much to do: the few conceptions that actually exist within me are scattered in a thousand directions — diffracted, dismembered, without form and void: and I have yet gained no right mastery of my pen, no right familiarity with the public to express them — even if worth expressing — to advantage. Nevertheless, I must persevere. What motive have I *not*, which man can have? The brightest hopes and the darkest fears: — on the one side are obscurity and isolation, the want of all that can render life endurable, and "Death sad refuge from the storms of Fate," [1] without even an approving conscience to disarm it of its sting; on the other is — ! — I tell you, my Friend, to be in no pain for me. Either I shall escape from this "obscure sojourn," or perish, as I ought, in trying it. The game is deep; but I must play it out: I can no other: so away with fear! *Nil desperandum, te duce et auspice te!* [There is nothing to despair of under thy leadership and auspices!] [2]

Meanwhile I am not unhappy. It is true I have none to love me here, none that I can love, no companion even whose head or heart can make me do aught but regret every hour I spend in such society: and accordingly I spend very few in it. But I have long been studying the painful lesson to live *alone:* and the task is easier as I am than it ever was. I enjoy quiet, and free air, and returning health; I have business in abundance for the present; and the future lies before me vaguely, — but with some

[1] Gray, "Progress of Poesy."

[2] Adapted from "*Nil desperandum, Teucro duce et auspice Teucro.*" — Horace, "Odes," i. 7, 27.

glimpses of a solemn beauty irradiating all its gloom. When I compare the aspect of the world to me now with what it was twelve months ago, I am far from desponding or complaining. I seem to have a motive and a rallying-word in the fight of life: when the battle is waxing fierce without, and the heart is waxing faint within, I shall remember it and do bravely. *Alles für Ruhm und Ihr!* [All for glory and her!]

You see how I talk about my own most precious self! It is a copious subject and a *safe* one: I have not done with it yet. Present my affectionate and grateful remembrances to your excellent Mother; and say I have not in any wise forgotten her most kind invitation.[1] I mean to profit by it sooner than she anticipates. If I had only finished some miserable compilations for their Encyclopædia, I am master of my own time, and then—!—In two weeks I am with you, *unless* you declare I absolutely must not. I beg you will not speak of that unfortunate Book. Alas, my dear Friend! if *one* page of it were written, nine-tenths of the difficulty would be over. It shall be forthcoming: have I not said it?

If you refuse me it will be very hard. Irving is speaking about a kind of Tutorship in some great family: and if I accept it, my excursions must be greatly circumscribed. The people offer £250 a-year, the chance of travelling, a number of hours per day to myself, and many other advantages, which ought perhaps to induce me. Let me see you before I decide: it may not be so easy afterwards: I have a million of things to say and to

[1] Carlyle had written to his mother (near the end of 1821): "I have a standing invitation, from a very excellent Mrs. Welsh, to go to Haddington often, as if I were going *home*."

ask. I will come some Wednesday evening, and go back on Sunday. You *will* not say me nay.

This *Sardanapalus* I thought you had not seen, and might wish to see: if it give you an hour's enjoyment, — well; if not you will forgive my mistake. — Write two words along with it to say whether I may come. *Do not* refuse. Adieu! — This is the most egotistic Letter I ever scribbled; you know what keeps me from other subjects: excuse me I conjure you, — if I have done wrong. Farewell! I am,

Yours *per sempre*,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

LETTER 8

Miss Welsh to T. Carlyle, Edinburgh

HADDINGTON, 'January, 1822.'

I have read the Tragedies.[1] I thank you for them. They are Byron's: need *I* praise them? I have also read your eloquent history of Faust. For it too, I thank you. It has fewer faults and greater merits than its Author led me to expect. I have moreover read your Letter. For *it* I do *not* thank you. It afforded me neither pleasure nor amusement. Indeed, my Friend, this Letter of yours has, to my mind, more than one fault. I do not allude to its being egotistical. To speak of oneself is, they say, a privilege of Friendship; . . . But there is about it an air of levity which I dislike; which seems to me to form an unnatural union with the other qualities of your head and heart, and to be ill-timed in treating of a subject to you the most

[1] "Sardanapalus," etc.

important of all subjects — your own *Destiny*. In a statesman venturing the hopes of his ambition on one decisive stroke; in a soldier rushing to the Battle to conquer or die, — I might admire the spirit of gay daring with which you seem to have been animated. But in a man sitting quietly in his chamber, contemplating years of labour, unattended with any danger (for I do not see that it is incumbent on you to "perish" because you fail in writing a good Novel, good Tragedy, or good anything else), — years of labour the result of which may be neither certain good nor certain evil, it seems to me, such a spirit is unnatural and ridiculous. Besides this there is about your Letter a *mystery* which I detest. It is so full of *meaning* words underlined; *meaning* sentences half-finished; *meaning* blanks with notes of admiration; and *meaning* quotations from foreign languages, that really in this abundance of meaning it seems to indicate, I am somewhat at a loss to discover what you would be at. I know how you will excuse yourself on this score: You will say that you knew my Mother would see your Letter; and that, of course, you cared not to what difficulties I as Interpreter might be subjected, so that you got your feelings towards me expressed. Now Sir, once for all, I beg you to understand that I dislike as much as my Mother disapproves your somewhat too ardent expressions of Friendship towards me; and that if you cannot write to me as to a man who feels a deep interest in your welfare, who admires your talents, respects your virtues, and for the sake of these has often, — perhaps too often, overlooked your faults; — if you cannot write to me as if — as if you were married, you need never waste ink or paper on me more.

"*Alles für Ruhm und Ihr*"!! On my word, most gay and gallantly said! One would almost believe the man fancies I have fallen in love with him, and entertain the splendid project of rewarding his literary labours with my self. Really, Sir, I do not design for you a recompense so worthless. If you render yourself an honoured member of society (and it seems to me that the pursuit of literary fame is, from the talents you possess, an easy, and, from the manner of life you have adopted, the *only* way of raising yourself from obscurity into the estimation of the wise and good), I will be to you a true, a constant, and devoted *Friend* — but not a Mistress, a Sister but not a Wife. Falling in love and marrying like other Misses, is quite out of the question. I have too little romance in my disposition ever to be in love with you or any other man; and too much ever to marry without love. Were I a man, I would not wait till *others* find your *worth* to say in the face of the whole world, "I admire this man, and choose him for my Friend." But I am a woman, Mr. Carlyle, and what is worse a young woman. Weakness, timidity and bondage are in the word. — But enough of this. Why do you force me into such horrid explanations?

You pass very hurriedly from the most important topic in your Letter, judging from the little you say of this Tutorship. I think your friends, if they had set about making a situation for you, could not have contrived one more desirable. "If you accept it?" I have no right to interfere in your private arrangements, but surely this "If" is a very ungrateful word.

You propose coming here. As I do not presume to forbid this house to any one whom my "excel-

lent Mother" invites, the matter, I grieve to say, rests with yourself. As you neither study *my* inclinations nor consider *my* comfort, it is in vain to say how much I am averse to your intended visit, and to how many impertinent conjectures it will at present subject me in this tattling ill-natured place. I leave it then to yourself to accomplish it or not, as you please, — with the warning that if you come you will repent it.[1] . . . My Mother knows nothing of your projected visit. She did not see your Letter. We were in bad humour with each other when it came; and, as, in spite of your precautions and the handsome adjective with which you ushered in your intention of visiting her, it seemed to me nowise calculated to improve her temper, I seized the opportunity which a fit of pet offered me, of laying it aside without showing it. . . . As I do not take the pet every night, no future Letter of yours may escape like your last. I beg, therefore, that you will make no *particular* allusion to any part of this Letter; for tho' my Mother knows that I am writing to you, she must not see it.

I trust however that your *Good Genius* will lead you to make an effort of self-denial. In that case, I shall be glad to hear from you some weeks hence.

[1] Had not Carlyle been deeply in love with Miss Welsh, and been endowed moreover with a large share of magnanimity, he would have been repelled by her raillery. It must be remembered too that he knew and understood her, — perhaps better than she did herself, — and was convinced that her heart even now told another and more favourable story than her pen. It was not in her power to hide from his keen eye that at the bottom of her heart she really admired and loved him. So he quietly persevered, held fast his faith in the power of Love, and believed with Shakespear, that

> "Foul words and frowns must not repel a lover;
> What though the Rose have prickles, yet 't is plucked"!

Earth, air and sea surely afford subjects enough for a Letter, to spare you the necessity of confining your ideas to yourself and me.

If you think me more prudent, or rather more rational, than formerly, resolve the difficulty thus: *Now* I am using the language of my own heart; *then* I was learning that of yours. Here I am Jane Welsh; in Edinburgh I was Mr. Carlyle's *Pupil.*

Your sincere Friend,

J. B. Welsh.

Letter 9

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

Edinburgh, Wednesday, '30 January, 1822.'
[By Post-mark].

My dear Friend, — I have read your Letter over and over; and admired the talent displayed in it not a little. It is very spirited and satirical and altogether very clever. I have a small, exceedingly small vein of satire myself: but there is no need to conjecture whether it would serve to defend me in the present instance: you know well enough I dare not try. It was once reckoned generous, I believe, to "crush the haughty, but spare those who cannot resist"; — however I do not complain. This conflict of sarcasms can hardly gratify or punish any very noble feeling in either you or me; and I am content to have my vanity humbled, since you wish it so.

The tragical humour into which men fall sometimes, is certainly a very unnatural and ridiculous thing; at least, if one is not born to be a Statesman or a Soldier, — the only class of persons liable to die or suffer pain in this country; so we shall waive it

for the present. I merely wish to say that when you read Schiller's History of the Thirty-Years War, you will like Bernhard von Weimar as much as I do. On going forth to fight beside Gustavus the Lion of the North, Bernhard wrote this epigraph on his standard: "*Alles für Ruhm und Ihr.*" And who was *She?* A great King's daughter, a brave King's Wife: and all the poor *Ritter* hoped for, was a smile from her fair countenance to greet his triumph, or a tear from her bright eyes to hallow his last and bloody bed. Perhaps it was all he wished.

Upon the whole, my friend, this mode of writing to you pleases me very ill. It also forms a most awkward prologue to the main purpose of my present Letter. In spite of the ridicule which you cast on me, or rather in part because of it, I am coming out to see you shortly. If you were to ask me what I am wanting? I should scarce know what to say. One has few real friends on this Earth; and yet the feelings excited by those few are almost all that make it worth living on. I daresay I am very selfish; but still, if I thought this project of mine would incommode you much, I am not *so* selfish as to persist in accomplishing it. The truth is, my visit must be brief at any rate, and may not soon be repeated; I know not the times and the seasons, but I do not often mean badly: therefore I have persuaded myself that you will not be angry at this proceeding, even tho' it should prove ill-judged and unsuitable for many reasons. If you intend to meet me with frowns and cold ceremony, tomorrow is still before us; tell me so, — and I will stay at home patiently. I have but from Friday-night till Monday-morning at my disposal. If you do not write I shall see you on Friday-night, or Saturday-

morning: if you do, I know not when I may have it in my power to see you again. Those Boys[1] are come from London, and have kept me busy all this week; some permanent arrangement is to be made with them about the beginning of next. — I am not ungrateful I hope, or insensible to my own interest; but there are many drawbacks, which I will tell you of.

This is poor suing; I need not continue it. Excuse all my thousand faults: I know their number, and regret their magnitude, as well as their number. — *Mais c'est assez!*

Present my kind respects to your Mother, if you think it worth while; and believe me to be, with no feelings towards you but those of an honest man and a true-hearted friend, now and always, — sincerely yours,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

LETTER 10

The visit to Haddington, proposed in his last Letter, was duly paid by Carlyle, notwithstanding Miss Welsh's strongly expressed warning that it would be unwelcome to her and her Mother; and the result, as might have been foreseen by any person less blinded by Love, was well-nigh disastrous. His reception by Mrs. Welsh was formal and frigid; and, worst of all, Miss Welsh (probably on the advice of her Mother) was cold, unfriendly, and quite unlike her former self.

That Carlyle was not mistaken in believing that Miss Welsh held him in some degree of favour and esteem, and was herself more capable than the average young lady of understanding him, is proved by what she wrote to Eliza Stodart at this very time: "I have just had a letter from

[1] Charles and Arthur Buller.

Thomas Carlyle: he, too, speaks of coming. He is something liker to St. Preux than George Craig is to Wolmar. He has *his* talents, *his* vast and cultivated mind, *his* vivid imagination, *his* independence of soul, and *his* high-souled principles of honour." [1] — But, for all this, Carlyle fell far short of her ideal in the matter of "elegance"; and this visit to Haddington in opposition to her express wishes was a fault not easy to pardon.

If Carlyle carried out the plan proposed in his last Letter, he would reach Haddington, after a walk of sixteen miles, late on Friday-night (1st Feb., 1822), stay over night at the George Inn, and make his call on Saturday-morning. That his reception would lack cordiality, and the interview be of short duration was only what one would expect in these circumstances. Perhaps the "final scene" in the chapter called "Romance" in "Sartor Resartus," wherein Teufelsdröckh "one morning finds his Morning-star all dimmed and dusky red," &c., has its origin in Carlyle's recollection of this unlucky adventure. The following Letter shows, at any rate, that the meeting had been unhappy and the parting ominous. Carlyle did not go again to Haddington for more than a year, and then only on the pressing invitation of both Mrs. Welsh and her Daughter; and but for the accidental intervention of Edward Irving, who sent a Letter to Carlyle's care, with the request that he would forward it to Miss Welsh, this Correspondence would in all probability have come to an untimely end.

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

3, Moray Street, Wednesday afternoon,
'13th February, 1822.'

My dear Friend, — The *Traité des Passions* [2] appears to be in great requisition among the reading

[1] "Early Letters of Jane Welsh Carlyle," p. 34.

[2] By the "Traité des Passions" is probably meant Madame de Staël's "Influence des Passions sur le bonheur des individus et des nations."

population of Edinburgh at present: I cannot find it unoccupied in any of the Libraries to which I have access. It is vain for me to harass the Librarians with repeated enquiries: I must wait till it *come in* before I can send it you. . . .

Irving inclosed me the Letter[1] which accompanies this — because he "knew not where to find you." I wrap it up with a volume of the *French Sallust*, the Abbé St. Réal; hoping that you may derive some amusement from perusing *Don Carlos*, or the groundwork of *Venice Preserved*;[2] or if not, that you will write me a few words on returning the book, and inclose me *something* which I dare not ask for, but trust you have not forgotten. I have not detained Irving's Letter: it arrived only yesternight.

The better part of a sheet still remains to me, and I have a volume of things to express to you: yet I scarce can find one word to say. It is shameful to own that I have already written two long Letters to you, and burnt them both, so soon as they were respectively finished. I value your correspondence so highly that I should grasp eagerly at the privilege of continuing it, under any terms: but my present state of mind is at once painful and contemptible. After that unfortunate visit, it seems as if our connection depended on a single hair; and I tremble lest some unguarded word may dissolve it forever. Surely if you knew into what a state of helpless agitation your anger reduces me, you would reserve

[1] Irving's Letter to Carlyle (inclosing that to Miss Welsh) is dated 9th February, 1822, from his Lodgings in Glasgow. The enclosure is of the same date, and may be read in full in Mrs. Oliphant's "Life of Edward Irving," i. 134–6 (2d ed.).

[2] The full title of St. Réal's book referred to here is "Conjuration que Espagnols formèrent en 1618 contre Venice."

the infliction of that severe chastisement for graver crimes — for offences against you, not of form but of deed. I appeal to the tribunal of my own conscience, and plead *not guilty* of any intention ever to displease you. Why then am I so unfortunate?

You bid me write to you as a *friend*.[1] Vain injunction! I must exhibit the true state of my feelings when I write, or else write like a shallow fool: and I never felt *friendship* of this sort towards any one. After the view I have obtained of your character, and the honours to which you have admitted me, I should be the dullest of the sons of men, if I could degenerate into what they call a friend. Be not displeased however, I am as far from pretending to be a lover as a friend. That pastime is not for me, at this period of my history, any more than for you. I have had too much experience of the emptiness of all sublunary things; have felt too often and too bitterly, how the clay insinuates its low impediments and corrupting deformities into all the lordliest conceptions of the soul, — ever to find much enjoyment in the languishings and happy tho' weak delusions of boys and girls. Besides, do I not know how we stand related towards each other? I understand what is your rank and what your prospects: I understand too what are my own; and perhaps there are feelings of integrity and honest pride within me, which I am as chary of as some who make more noise about them. Do not *you* look upon me as a slave,[2] however others may look upon me.

In fine I beg earnestly for one sentence from you, somewhat in the shape of encouragement. I am a

[1] See Letter No. 8.

[2] *Cf.* "A Briton, even in love, should be
A subject, not a slave!" — WORDSWORTH (in 1827).

perfect wreck at present, and know not what to do or think. There are wild retreats, indeed, in which all minds may seek refuge. I know it but too well — the feeling of recklessness and stormy self-help, when friends grow cold, and the world seems to cast us off, and the heart gathers force from its own wretchedness, converting its "tortures into horrid arms."[1] There is strength here and dignity — "tho' full of pain":[2] but alas! do I need to say that you are the last of all earthly beings against whom I could wish to entertain such sentiments. Once more then, I entreat for one word of kindness. Forget the roughness of my exterior, if you think me sound within. Let me write to you with frankness and from the heart, if you would not have me altogether despicable. The Graces cannot live under a sky so gloomy and tempestuous as mine: I lament their absence, since you lament it; but there is no remedy. If Nature had meant me for a courtly person, she would have made me richer and more impudent. In this latter point, you think she has been liberal enough: how widely, how cruelly do you mistake me!

I have left no room for details about myself or enquiries about you. Write as you *once* would have written to me, and I shall know how to tell and how to ask. — There is a kind of engagement for six months at least, entered into with regard to those Boys: their Greek and their vanities take up my time too much. — I pass Mr. Bradfute's door every day; and seldom without thinking of the *last* time I saw you there. Would I had never seen you since! I should then still think what perhaps I

[1] "Paradise Lost," ii. 63.

[2] *Ibid.* ii. 147.

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must never think any more. — Excuse all this incoherence: I am hurried and confused in a thousand ways. Farewell! May the Great Father of the fatherless, ever have you in his keeping! Farewell!

I am always
Yours from the heart,
THOMAS CARLYLE.

LETTER II

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

MORAY STREET, 26th February, 1822.

UPON the whole, I like this task[1] better than any I have had for a long while: I have enjoyed a thousand little pleasures in going on with it. I hope you will send me more work immediately: and, observe, mark along with the passages selected, the *page* where you find them, — or my translation must run a risk of being wide of the mark. The phrases marked with a star, I could not discover in a cursory glance which I had today of an Edition of *Karlos* (the same as yours); and therefore they are not to be relied upon as correct. If I have erred, send them back again and again till all be clear as noon. You will speedily, it is probable, be far beyond the reach of my assistance: let me help you as long as I can.

[1] Correcting a translation of some difficult passages in "Don Karlos," which Miss Welsh had submitted to Carlyle. His Letter takes the form of a postscript to the corrections, and is written on the same sheet of paper. "Don Karlos" was Carlyle's first present to Miss Welsh.

Those books have been waiting for you, some day or two; and recollect, you only said I *need* not send them. As to writing, I know I *must* not, and so refrain. Indeed I have no great temptation to act otherwise; for I will confess your Letter[1] pleased me less at first sight than it might have done. This morning, when they gave it me, I was moping and musing (as my custom is) over ten thousand thoughts which I have no living heart to entrust with; and that strain of elegant mockery, tho' richly merited, I doubt not, appeared somewhat unsuitable to the earnestness (whatever be the extravagance) of the feelings against which it was directed. Alas! I know too well — without any telling — that *the style* is absurd enough: but surely it is not for the sake of rhetoric and grammar that we write to each other. It seems to me that the chief end of Letters is to exhibit to each a picture of the other's soul, — of all the hopes and fears that agitate us, the joys and sorsows and varied anxieties in which a heart's-friend may be expected to sympathise: and if I may trust my own judgement, this employment is even more useful (I say not a word of the delight attending it) than any other to which our imperfect means of communication can be devoted. The three grains of knowledge mixed up in three bushels of error, which people make such a din about, are taught in Colleges and Schools, and set forth in the thousand times ten thousand heavy tomes: why should our poor scanty pages be employed in adding to the heap? Man's noblest part is not his poor glimmering taper of an understanding; Lucifer *knows* far more than ever Bacon knew: it is the heart that

[1] This Letter has not been preserved.

makes us great or little; and who would not rather be the meanest creature that can *love*, than the highest that could but *perceive?* Is it fit then that what is less dignified and altogether selfish in our nature should be cultivated exclusively? Oh for a friend — a bosom-friend — the treasure which many seek and few successfully — to be our own and ours alone, to have but one soul and spirit with us, to reflect back our every feeling, to love us and be loved without measure! I declare an hour of such high and sacred communion is worth more in my eyes than a whole eternity of shallow speculation. — But I forget: I *am* writing; and somewhat too wildly also: I have done.

Send me a Letter, I pray you, when you return those tomes. I would know all that you are doing, wishing, thinking: I long to tell you all that I am doing in return. Those Verses on Napoleon, I suspect, are by a favourite of mine as well as of yours: I will criticise them next time; they deserve a more careful criticism than I have yet had time to give them. How is your blank-verse Carlos proceeding? Your Tasso? How do you like "Les Passions," and Alfieri? No bad commentary on some of them? Speak to me without reserve; and let me do the like.

I am always yours,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

Wednesday, 2 o'clock. What a fool I am! Today your Letter seems an excellent Letter, and you the kindest creature in the world for sending it. I wish however I had abode by my first resolution — that of writing nothing but German. Forgive as usual.

I have just learned that Irving and William Gra-

ham [1] are coming from Glasgow tonight, to stay with me for a week. G. is one of the worthiest persons alive: they have been telling him about *you*, apparently; and the man will have it that Dumfriesshire *is* your *Vaterland*.

Letter 12

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

3, Moray Street, 19th April, 1822.

My dear Madam, — I happened to fall in with these books lately; and thinking they might perhaps amuse you for a little, I have made bold to send them. You will pardon me for doing so, if it be offensive to you.

I have got no German queries from you for a long while. It would grieve me much if I imagined that any cause but your not wanting farther help in those studies, had prevented you from applying to me. I have often said that few gratifications could be dearer to me than that of being able to forward your interest in any point: I again beg you to believe that in such cases (if there be any such), I alone am the obliged party.

One or two things have occurred to me, in the course of reading or reflexion, which I thought might perhaps be useful to you as subjects of literary composition: if you care aught about them, they are altogether at your service.

I would gladly stand in your Mother's remem-

[1] Of Burnswark near Ecclefechan. He was at this time a prosperous merchant in Glasgow.— See "Reminiscences," ii. 78–84.

brance as she does in mine. I desire you to present my kind respects to her, if you think fit: and to consider me as being at all times

Yours with sincere and affectionate esteem,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

LETTER 13

Miss Welsh to T. Carlyle, Edinburgh.

HADDINGTON, Saturday, '27 April, 1822.'

FROM a sheet of paper pretending to be a Letter, that came to me some days ago, I learned to my great surprise and satisfaction, that the wrecked Mr. Carlyle has been restored in mind and body to his lamenting friends.

Truly Sir, to my mind you have made a far more wonderful escape than Jonah did. Jonah during his three days' visit to the deep, was snug in the capacious belly of a whale, whereas you have been actually swallowed up by the waves, for many weeks, without (as far as I know) getting into the inside of any fish whatever. You must have seen strange sights since our last meeting. I should be glad to know if the blue-devils below waters are anything like those that we have here. I will thank you also to transmit to me the papers which you mention[1] before you set out on your next voyage.

For some weeks past the clever people here have been without half their wits, and the silly ones (that is to say everybody except my Mother, Shandy and myself) have been stark mad. Barnyards have

[1] The things which might be useful to Miss Welsh as "subjects of literary composition," referred to in the last paragraph but one in the preceding Letter.

blazed till the conflagration has spread over the brains of our whole community. It will be well if it does them no further mischief; for of all their possessions their wits will be the least missed.

I thank you for Cowper: he is a charming creature, and makes me laugh; but yet he is not a man according to my heart. — Oh no! I cannot exactly tell my fault to him: I think he draws so largely on my pity that I cannot spare him much of my admiration. — I am in a *terrible* hurry. My Mother has called on me half a dozen times since I began to write. — I am going to the Country, but will be at home on Wednesday to receive your expected communications, if it is convenient for you to write on that day.

Yours with humility,
JANE BAILLIE PENELOPE[1] WELSH.

LETTER 14

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

EDINBURGH, 30th April, 1822.

MY DEAR MADAM, — I address myself with the greatest pleasure to the task which you have so kindly imposed on me. I very much approve

[1] Pen (from Penfillan, home of Miss Welsh's paternal grandfather) was her pet name used to distinguish her from the Welshes of her maternal grandfather's household, especially from her mother's younger sister whose name was also Jeannie Welsh. Conscious of procrastinating too long in writing, Miss Welsh here sportively enlarges Pen not into Penfillan but into Penelope, the name of Ulysses' faithful wife, who put off for so long the hateful task of choosing a husband from the wasteful and riotous horde of suitors assembled in her house during Ulysses' protracted absence. — See HOMER's "Odyssey."

your resolution to exercise your powers in some sort of literary effort; and I shall think myself happy, if by any means I can aid you in putting it in practice. There is nothing more injurious to the faculties than to keep poring over books continually without attempting to exhibit any of our own conceptions. We amass ideas, it is true; but at the same time we proportionably weaken our power of expressing them; a power equally valuable with that of conceiving them, and which, tho' in some degree like it the gift of Nature, is in a far higher degree the fruit of art, and so languishes more irretrievably by want of culture. Besides, our very conceptions when not taken up with the view of being delineated in writing are almost sure to become vague and disorganised; a glimpse of the truth will often satisfy mere curiosity equally with a full view of it; so hallucinations are apt to be substituted for perceptions; and even if our materials were all individually accurate, yet being gathered together from every quarter, and heaped into one undistinguished mass, they form at last an unmanageable chaos, serving little purpose except to perplex and cumber the mind that lives among them — to make it vacillating, irregular, and very unhappy — at least if it have not the fortune to be a pedant's mind — who I believe is generally a very cheerful character.

So that you see it is every way incumbent upon you to commence writing without loss of time: and to continue it steadily as you proceed in the acquisition of knowledge, thus causing the development of your taste and of your ability to realize its dictates to go forward hand in hand. I do not imagine that you stand in need of all this confused logic to

animate you in this undertaking: — inclination, I know well enough, impels you sufficiently at present; but inclination is ofttimes rather an unsteady guide, and at no time the worse for having conviction along with it.

There is not room here for dilating upon the peculiarities of your genius; to which at any rate I have no right to make myself inspector, even if my knowledge of the subject rendered my opinion worth the giving. I cannot help saying, however, that according to my imperfect observations, you seem, with great keenness of intellectual vision generally, to unite a decided tendency to the study of human character both as an object of curiosity and of love or contempt, and to manifest a very striking faculty of expressing its peculiarities, not only by description but imitation. This is the very essence of dramatic genius; and if I mistake not, the blame will lie elsewhere than with Nature if you fail of producing something worth producing in this department. It depends on other circumstances than your intellectual powers, whether you should adopt the tragic or the comic species of composition: you know whether you feel more disposition to sympathise with the wretched or to laugh at the happy; to admire excellence or to search out defects; to cherish long vehement, heartfelt, perhaps extravagant enthusiasm, or to exert the force of your heart in brief, violent sallies, the violence of which a sense of propriety is ever subduing and rendering of short continuance — converting indignation into derision, sympathy into pity and admiration into respect. The truth is those two kinds of talent are never so accurately divided in nature, as the two objects of them are in

art; most people who could write a tragedy of merit could write a sort of comedy also, and *vice versa.* It is not indeed necessary to confine your efforts either to the one or to the other: the kind of genius named dramatic may be employed in a thousand ways unconnected with the theatre; it gives life and splendour to the picturesque Novels of Sir Walter Scott; and forms, in a different shape, the basis of much sublime philosophy in the treatises of Madame de Staël. It is misemployed only when it is unoccupied; when the understanding, the invention, the fancy which might have given it a local habitation and a name, a shape and vehicle, are devoted to purposes in which it does not enter — to studying abstract sciences or manufacturing smart paragraphs — writing epigrams or reading metaphysics and mathematics — or anything of a similar stamp. I would not have you, therefore, confine yourself too rigidly to mere Plays; it will be enough if you are engaged in the delineation or inspection of character — without which I imagine you cannot do justice to your powers; but in the investigation of which you are not bound to any particular form of composition, being at liberty to cast your ideas into the shape of a historical description, of a Panegyric, of a Novel, quite as much as of a regular drama. For this reason — But the Subjects? you say — the Subjects — and have done with this prosing! — Well! here are two.

The first is a Tragedy to be constructed from the story of Boadicea Queen of the Iceni, a British Tribe during her time under the dominion of the Romans. I know not if you are acquainted with the story of this Lady: it is related in the 14th

Book of Tacitus' Annals — in Henry's History (I suppose), both of which Works I can send you if you like. She was the widow of Prasutagus who to secure the peace of his household had left the Emperor (Nero) coheir with his two daughters and their mother: his kindness was unworthily requited; the Roman soldiers not only harried and laid waste his territory, but carried their brutal violence into the Palace itself; Boadicea was beaten like a slave, and her two daughters used inhumanly. Treatment which the "crafty Lioness" was not slow or powerless to resent. She assembled the people, all driven already to madness by oppression, persuaded them to take arms, and turn against their tyrant. They did so after many omens and superstitious observances. Their vengeance was signal; they rioted awhile in victory and blood, then met the Romans collected into a formidable body; and set their whole hopes of peace or even of life upon the cast at once. Boadicea harangued the men in person, many of their wives and children sitting on wagons behind the ranks to animate them in the fight. "She was of stature big and tall, of visage grim and stern, harsh of voice; her hair of bright colour flowed down to her limbs; she wore a plaited garment of divers colours, with a large gold chain; buttoned over all, a thick robe." The battle was lost to her; the British slaughtered miserably; she dispatched herself by poison.

The advantages of these materials are considerable in my opinion. They are yet untouched, so far as I know; they carry you back into an age the manners of which are so unknown that they may be fashioned according to your pleasure; and they present you a variety of characters fitted for Tragedy,

and one eminently tragical character to group them all around. Boadicea (she need not be "big" or "grim" unless you like) is a character too which you could manage well. You have the widowed matron, the high-spirited woman, the patriot — the mother, the Queen, irritated, exasperated beyond the possibility of remedy; — you could show her proud endurance of first injuries — her fiery purpose to endure them no longer, — her sympathy with the patriotic agony of her subjects, once free, now enslaved, — and to Nero; her sway over every mind — men serving her with the devotion due at once to a Sovereign of a lofty spirit and to an injured female: then you might interweave with it as much of the gloomy superstition as you chose — Druids with their wooden Idols and human victims, their portents and prodigies and cursings of their foes — "many women like furies running to and fro in dismal habits; with their hair loose about their shoulders, holding torches in their hands": and lastly you have a fit catastrophe provided for you, and many happy contrasts — between the simple unpolished Britons and the luxurious adventurers of the Roman Armies, the injured Boadicea, and the wicked tyrant for whom she was injured — the collision of native fervour and desperate resolution against Military discipline and war-like glory. — I do wish you would set about the consideration of it. I have set it forth very wretchedly here; I am quite confident you would think far better of it, if you saw the histories which describe it fully. Do undertake it; and send to me for all books whatsoever connected with it. If I saw you — I should have great hope to persuade you. I am sure you could make something fine of it. And what tho' it should

not be perfect — as indeed your first attempt has little chance to be? It is better to *erect* a hut than to *dream* of erecting a palace.

Perhaps, however, I mistake the matter; and over-rate the capabilities of the subject, because I could wish to know you engaged in *some* subject, and if possible (I may as well confess it) in one of my suggesting. Give no heed then to my pleadings, beyond what the reason of the case directs: consider Boadicea with your own judgement and decide accordingly. I have another Tragedy in store for you: — but not to-night; that unmelodious Watchman is saying or singing something about "One o'clock." You shall have "Perkin Warbeck" tomorrow. I pray for soft sleep to you, and a glad awakening — wherever you may be. *A Dieu!*

Cetera desunt.

T. Carlyle.

If this *Henry*,[1] who I fear is a very stupid gentleman, prove insufficient, tell me.

Letter 15

Miss Welsh to T. Carlyle, Edinburgh

Haddington, Tuesday, 'May, 1822.'

Dear Sir, — I would have returned *Delphine*[2] long ago, had you not sent *Henry* along with it. She is a most fascinating being. I have liked nobody half so well for a great while. I ought not —

[1] Henry's "History of England."
[2] By Madame de Staël.

at least sage people say I ought not — to admire the book; nevertheless I cannot for my life help liking it better than any novel of six volumes I ever read. I declare the idea of having Madame de Staël for an acquaintance in the world of spirits makes me half wish to die. — As to Henry, he is a downright blockhead; and had you not desired me to read him I could have taken an everlasting farewell of his "probably's" and "we may suppose's," in the first half dozen pages. I have toiled with a vexed spirit through the whole volume, and after all, the material I have got would make but a starved Tragedy.

I have neither genius, taste nor common-sense; I have no courage, no industry, no perseverance; and how in the name of wonder can I write a Tragedy! I am not at all the sort of person you and I took me for. I begin to think that I was actually meant by nature to be a fine-lady. My friends, that is my acquaintances, have told me this all along; but I would not believe them. For the last month however, I have shown lamentable symptoms of a tendency that way: I have spent all my time in riding on horse-back, dressing three times a-day, singing Italian airs, and playing at shuttlecock! Dear Sir, what will cure me? I have just enough reason left to perceive that I am in a bad way. If another such month passes over me, I am a lost woman. Even my ambition is expiring very fast: I am as proud of striking the shuttlecock two hundred times, as if I had written two hundred admirable verses. The certainty I have felt for some time that I will never excell the hundreds of female Novelists who infest the Kingdom, is the chief cause of this sudden change in my tastes and pur-

suits. And what can cure the want of talent? Oh, dear me! I shall never hold a respectable place among literary ladies. But I know I can be a first-rate fine-lady whenever I please. The temptation is strong; furnish me with an antidote, if you can. I am not capable of designing a Tragedy at present. Indeed I do not see how one can make the story of Boadicea sufficiently interesting. For mercy's sake sketch it for me, and I will if I can, fill it up.

I am not to be in town during the Assembly;[1] possibly my Mother may be there for a day; but I will not accompany her.

I wish you may be able to read this: I am in the most dreadful hurry ever poor wretch was in.

Yours truly,

JANE BAILLIE WELSH.

LETTER 16

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

EDINBURGH, 'May, 1822.'

(*Beginning of Letter lost*) . . . Have you entirely abandoned the idea of translating *Don Karlos?* That were a fair enterprise, and one in which success would be a noble thing. Coleridge is not more celebrated for any thing he has done than for his version of *Wallenstein.* — Nay, I have still another scheme which I have not yet told you of. Some con-

[1] "General Assembly" of Ministers and Elders (elected in rotation) of the Church of Scotland, which meets annually in Edinburgh in the latter half of May. It corresponds somewhat to Episcopal "Convocation"; but the lay element is represented, and the meetings are "open" on easy conditions.

siderable time ago, it came into my unfortunate head that I had one or two sparks of the poetic temperament in my composition; and I thought what a fine thing it would be to write *in metre*. Your stanzas on Napoleon suggested the notion to me, and I sat down in the spirit of generous rivalry to try and do the like. The result — that small piece of fustian[1] — which might have shown me how lamentably I was wrong, I now send to you. Do not criticize it — *parce victis* [spare the conquered]; but tell me what you think of the project which gave rise to it, and which the ill success of it has well-nigh consigned to everlasting oblivion? You must know that I meant that we two should engage to each other to produce, every fortnight, for mutual inspection, a given number of verses, upon subjects chosen by ourselves alternately; and thus I concluded that if there was any poetry within us it would be elicited at length; if not, we should but have made some indifferent couplets, upon paper of our own, and harmed no man whatever. Now tell me, would you take up the glove, if I should throw it down, still? I long for a reply.

Is it not very hard that you have broken your resolution about the General Assembly? One half hour's conversation would enable us to settle all those things better than a whole day's scribbling. — It is a year about this very hour since I saw you for the first time! How many years will it be before I can totally forget all that! — God bless you and keep you forever!

I am always your friend,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

[1] Lines on Napoleon.

I will not allow you another Novel this month. Châteaubriand is the last of the series: he is the finest genius and the greatest fool in France at present. See his *Génie du Christianisme*. Sismondi's *Litterature du Midi* is in waiting for you; but I wished to hear from you in answer to those projects of mine, as soon as possible. — Your Mother will hear Chalmers if she come to Town. Is there *no* hope of *you?*

Letter 17

Miss Welsh to T. Carlyle, Edinburgh

Haddington, 'May, 1822.'

My dear Sir, — Your last Letter passed me on my way to Edinburgh on Saturday, and only reached me on my return on Wednesday evening. You are ready to get into a mighty passion, are you not? But stay a moment till you have heard my defence.

I did not know I was going to Town till a few hours before I set out; so that I had no time to instruct you of my intention. While there my forenoons were entirely occupied in shopping, making calls, running after Dr. Chalmers, walking to Slateford, and seeing the Panorama of Naples (which by the way, if you have not seen, you ought to see); my afternoons in dining out, or with a party at home. Had I been alone, I would have arranged my time otherwise, and more to my own satisfaction; but my motions being dependent on my Mother's, it was utterly impossible for me to afford you one half-hour, although *I really wished it*. I hope I need not say more. I have found you a reasonable being of late; as such then I shall treat you.

You were not better pleased with my last Letter

than I am with yours. Write always thus, speak always thus, and you will not find me the weak, inconstant being you take me for. The affectionate interest you take in my welfare can be disagreeable to me only when it seems likely to prove hurtful to yourself. — But no more of this hateful subject: I trust we understand each other at last. And I may now enjoy your friendship without the dread of finding it one day converted into enmity.

My mind is still in an evil way. I came home full of wise resolution. The dust and bustle and follies of Edinburgh made my heart turn again to study and retirement. I thought to rise at five on Thursday morning; but fatigue made my head bad; I slept till nine. I opened "Mary Stuart"[1] after breakfast; but Dr. Fyffe[2] interrupted me, and teased me to play at shuttlecock till I consented. When we had finished, I observed the Piano open, and Lord Byron's "Fare Thee well" (my favourite song) staring me in the face. I sat down and played and sang badly till dinner time. The evening I spent, as I spend too many, at an odious tea-party; and by the time that I had heard little Charles Terrot say his prayers, and got him put to bed, my day was gone! And so have gone the following ones. Since my return I have read *Atala*,[3] twelve lines of *Mary Stuart*, written two pages of *two Novels*, and four lines of an Ode to Wilhelmina, and moreover I have darned two rents in my gown. Behold the fruit of my resolutions, the sum-total of my labours! But I am resolved to make a vigorous

[1] Schiller's, most likely.

[2] See Carlyle's "Reminiscences," i. 70.

[3] A romance of life among the North American Indians by Châteaubriand. Published in 1801.

effort tomorrow; for it fills me with shame to lead a life like this. My horse is lame, which is greatly in my favour.

I like your project exceedingly. Do let us set about it forthwith. I admire your lines upon Napoleon very much, and feel grateful to you for the kindness you there show him; for I am sure it is for my sake you have dealt with him so mercifully. Were I selfish I would almost regret you sent me these, — they have made me so dissatisfied with my own. — I do not like *Atala;* what tempted you to send me such nonsense?

Mr. Irving told me you thought of entering the lists with Plutarch.[1] Have you that project still in view? I liked it much. It is a pity you should allow year after year to glide away without making any vigorous effort to become known. You may suppose my wish to see my friends famous is one of the effects of my ruling foible; but surely there is nothing weak in longing to see those I love happy and filling the station in life Nature designed them for. — I send you a little silly translation of the verses[2] you gave me long ago. Don't laugh excessively at it; but write me a better that I may profit by discovering its defects. Give me a *subject* next time you write.

Forgive me this very stupid Letter. I am labouring under a severe headache. But I could not think of letting another day pass without writing, lest you might fancy anything the matter with me.

Your sincere friend,

JANE B. WELSH.

Shandy sends you his love.

[1] In writing biographies of eminent people.

[2] "The Fisher," by Goethe. — See Appendix A, No. 1.

Letter 18

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

3, Moray Street, 27th May, 1822.

My dear Friend, — I kept looking out for you or your Mother, almost every day last week; not once suspecting that you could visit Edinburgh and leave it, without communicating that event to so important a person as myself. It were unprofitable, not to say absurd, to make any kind of outcry about this occurrence now; and very absurd to charge you with any blame in the matter: another time, however, I hope for better fortune.

I have little leisure for writing today: only I could not defer sending you Sismondi's book,[1] which I hope you will peruse with some profit as well as enjoyment. It is equally remote from the "nonsense" of *Atala*, and from the rude, melancholy vastness of that famous work — otherwise in truth so full of gross deformities. Sismondi is a lively, dapper, elegant, little fellow, full of good sense and learning and correct sentiment: he resembles our Jeffrey somewhat — a *clever* man, with rather less of natural talent than Jeffrey has, and about ten times as much knowledge and culture. You must read his Treatise, if possible; were it but for the sake of the Italians, in whose literature he is extremely versant.

It gives me great pleasure to find you so hearty in our poetical project: I trust good will come of it to us both. Hardly any creature is born

[1] "Litterature du Midi."

without some thrills of poetry in his nature, which practice and instruction might enable him to express: and surely it were delightful, if when the mind feels so inflamed or overpowered in the various turns of this its confused and fluctuating existence, — astonished at the stupendous aspect of the universe — charmed, saddened, tortured in the course or in the prospect of its own great and gloomy and mysterious destiny, — it could embody those emotions, which now serve only to encumber and depress it, in music and imagery, in "thoughts that breathe and words that burn";[1] so gratifying, by employing its own best faculties; and brightening its own sensations, by causing all around to share in them. Nature, it is true, makes one right Poet seldom — scarcely in the hundred years; but she makes a thousand rhymers in the day, with less or more of poetry in each. Our attempt then is not too arduous: I predict that if we persevere, we shall both succeed in making very tolerable verses, *perhaps* something more than tolerable; and this itself I reckon a very pleasing and harmless and very ornamental acquirement. Many a time I have wished that, when ruining my health with their poor lean triangles and sines and tangents and fluxions and calculi, I had but been writing any kind of doggerel however weak: it would have improved the understanding, at least *mine* I am sure, quite as much or more — that is, left it where it was; and *now*, I might have been inditing odes and dithyrambics by the gross! The past is gone for aye: but "better late than never!", — as the adage runs. Do not think me altogether crazy: I am no poet, "have no genius," I know it well:

[1] Gray, "Progress of Poesy," Pt. iii. St. 3, l. 4.

but I *can* learn to make words jingle whenever I think fit; and by the blessing of Heaven, we two will try it now in concert as long as we like.

I wish therefore you would meditate some plan, some terms and conditions for carrying it on. Shall we prescribe the subject alternately? And should it be a *specific* subject that is prescribed, or merely the *class* of subjects to which it must belong — "a descriptive piece," for instance, — "an incident — pathetic, tragical, ludicrous" — "a character — great, bad, &c." — or *some* descriptive piece — *some* incident — *some* character? Or shall it merely be that each is to give in a certain quantity of verse within a stated time? Settle all this to your own satisfaction — or leave it all unsettled, if you like better. I have yet had no time to consider the business properly, or even to select a proper topic for our *coup d'essai*. The most plausible task I can hit upon is a little Article to be entitled *The Wish*, wherein we are to set forth respectively the kind of fate and condition we most long for — and have some feeble expectation of attaining. Yours will be very different from mine, I know. It will be curious to compare notes, if we both deal honestly, — which is not necessary however. Try this; and send it along when ready — with another theme, so it be an easy one.

These little *parergies* and recreations will do you no harm, I am persuaded; yet I cannot help still wishing to see you employed in some more serious composition, while your stock of knowledge from books and other sources must be augmenting so rapidly. Did you think anything about the essay on Madame de Staël? I am still of opinion that it would be a very fine exercise for you; and one

you are well prepared for, having studied all her writings and feeling so deep an interest in all that concerns her. What is to hinder you from delineating your conception of her mind; saying all you feel about her character as a thinker, as a poet, and still more as a woman; comparing her in all these aspects both with the ordinary throng of mortals, and with all the distinguished females you have heard or formed any idea of? I really wish you would begin in sober prose, and do this for me as honestly and correctly as you possibly can. I enquired after her Life for you today; but it could not be had: however, if you engage to execute this undertaking, or otherwise desire to see the book, I will certainly find it. Consider this at any rate; for I am eager about it, being convinced it would prove useful to you.

The interest you take in my unfortunate projects I feel with the gratitude due to your kind treatment of me on all occasions. That historico-biographical one is still in embryo, but not yet abandoned. It seems quite indispensable that I should make an effort soon; I shall have no settled peace of mind till then. Often it grieves me to be besieged with Printer's-Devils wanting *copy* (of *Legendre*, a " most scientific " treatise on Geometry which I unhappily engaged to translate long ago), with small boys studying Greek, and the many cares of life; when I *might* be &c. Till August, I cannot even get this *Book* fashioned into any shape, much less actually commenced. Meantime I read by snatches partly with a view to it. If ever, which is just possible, I get the mastery over these difficulties, which it is hard to strive with but glorious to conquer, I shall experience many an enviable feeling at the thought

of having vindicated Jane for the encouragement she gave me. — Excuse this silly idea — for it is pleasant to me; and this dull Letter, which I have already spun out too long. — I am ever yours,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

I am already too late for the Coach; so I shall take time enough with your Translation of "The Fisher." Be sure to send me abundance of such "trash" as your Verses on the Sunset, and those from *Atala;*[1] it is of the kind I like.

If Shandy understood articulate speech, I would gladly return his compliments; for he is a dog of worth undoubtedly. He would give me welcome wherever he met me, which is all he can do, poor fellow, — and more than every one of our human friends can do. — You should take a long ride *every* day — your Mother should insist on it.

LETTER 19

Miss Welsh to T. Carlyle, Edinburgh

HADDINGTON, 'June, 1822.'

"RICHARD is himself again!" I am sure you will rejoice at the Phœnix-like renovation of my faculties. They have been in *full force* ever since I wrote you. I have learned my German and Italian lessons as usual; read several hours a-day; and regularly tortured my fingers with Beethoven's Themas for another hour. Besides all this, I have put feathers into a hat, written four angry Notes to my dress-

[1] See Appendix A, No. 2.

maker, and drawn a nose and ear to Belisarius.[1] I fear you will think the time I have kept *Sismondi* no great proof of my industry. On the very same day you sent it, I received three other parcels of books: *Corinne*, *The Fortunes of Nigel*, and a silly thing called *Happiness*. All these I had to read before I could get at him.

I think I heard you say you did not think very highly of *Corinne*. You must read it again: nobody with a heart and soul can fail to admire it. I never read a book in my life that made such an impression on me. I cried *two whole hours* at the conclusion, and in all likelihood I might have been crying to this minute, but for an engagement to a party in the evening, where prudential considerations required that my eyes should be visible. — Have you read *Nigel?* I think wondrous little of it. — I am exceedingly obliged to you for *Sismondi*. I have only read the first volume, but I like it very much. I beg of you do not laugh much at my translations, or any of the silly things I send you; and do not think that it is vanity that tempts me to submit them to your inspection. Nobody can hold the trash I write, in deeper contempt than I myself do; indeed, I often think I might write better if I had more conceit. — How much poetry have you written? Send me every line of it. My *Wish*[2] is the most foolish little thing possible. I would not send it if I had time to write another; tho' perhaps the next might be as bad. The other lines came into my head when I was thinking about my *Wishes*.

[1] A picture *said* to be of Belisarius the great Roman general, representing him as sitting, begging pennies from passers by.

[2] See Appendix A, No. 3.

Read from page 211 to 219 of *Sismondi*, and tell me if you think the Siege of Carcassonne would afford materials for a Tragedy. If you do, tell me where I will find any other particulars I ought to know; and I will try it.

I thank you for the trouble you took with my unfortunate *Fisher*. You have improved him greatly. I am sorry to send you such a short Letter, for your last deserves a longer and a better; but I cannot help it today: that Ass, A—— S——, came in just as I began writing, and occupied my time till within a few minutes of the Coach-hour. Send me your *Wish* immediately. And believe me

Your sincere friend,
JANE WELSH.

LETTER 20

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

3, MORAY-STREET, Monday-night,
'June, 1822.'

MY DEAR FRIEND, — After a very admirable display of patience, I was rewarded one evening, while I thought of no such thing, by the sight of your much valued packet. "That Ass" I never liked; but then I absolutely hated her, and wished fervently that she had either delivered you from her inane presence altogether, or at least timed her visit better. As it is, I give you thanks from the heart for your Letter. It is quite delightful, in its way, for me to enjoy those little peeps you afford me here and there into your domestic ways. I see the "feathers" overshadowing your hat; I tremble at the "four angry Notes" inflicted on your dress-

maker; imagine the "nose and ear" of the conqueror of the Goths; and think what I would give to hear you practising never so "badly" the Themas of Mozart and Beethoven. It is when Letters are thrown off in that gay cheerful social way, that one has some pleasure in them.

I viewed your poetical dispatches with a feeling made up of pleasure and surprise. This is greatly the best collection you have ever shown me: if you go on at anything like the same rate, I indeed may wish you "a good journey" — but I shall not the less rejoice at your reaching the promised land — tho' myself still lingering in the wilderness. In fact I am quite ashamed, on considering your verses, to compare them, either in quantity or quality, with my own performance in the same period. I am certainly an idle knave; and shall never rhyme, or do anything else, to right purpose. Your "Wish" is quite an emblem of your usual treacherous disposition. There you go on persuading us that you are growing a delightful romantic character — alive to all the simple enjoyments of existence — and prizing them above all others as they ought to be; and when you have fairly *led us in*, and we are beginning to admire you in good earnest, — we hear a suppressed titter, which dissipates the whole illusion, and tells us that we are — poor fools! I like the accompanying pieces better; the lines beginning with "I love"[1] the best of all. In these the ideas are brilliant, the language emphatic and sonorous, the rhythm very musical and appropriate. The little Epigram from the Provençal Satyrist[2] is also

[1] See Appendix A, No. 4.
[2] See Appendix A, No. 5.

a favourite with me: it seems to be rendered with great spirit and liveliness. Ferdusi and the hesitating Lover[1] are subjects which interest me less; but you have succeeded in translating both extremely well.

It is truly gratifying to me to contemplate you advancing so rapidly in the path of mental culture. Proceed as you have begun; and I shall yet see the day, when I may ask with pride: Did not I predict this? There are a thousand peculiar obstacles — a thousand peculiar miseries that attend upon a life devoted to the task of observing and feeling, and recording its observations and feelings — but any ray of genius however feeble is the "enshrined gift of God"; and woe to him or her that hides the talent in a napkin! that allows indolence or sordid aims to prevent the exercise of it, in the way designed by our all-bountiful Parent — the elevation of our own nature, and the delight or instruction of our fellow-mortals — on a scale proportioned to our power! And look to the reward, even in the life that now is! Kings and Potentates are a gaudy folk that flaunt about with plumes and ribbons to decorate them, and catch the coarse admiration of the many-headed monster, for a brief season — then sink into forgetfulness or often to a remembrance even worse: but the Miltons, the de Staëls — these *are* the very salt of the Earth: they derive their "patents of Nobility direct from Almighty God," and live in the bosoms of all true men to all ages.

Alas! that it is so much easier to talk thus than to act in conformity to such rational maxims! I verily believe you are quite right in your estimate of me: I seem indeed to be a mere talker — a *vox*

[1] See Appendix A, No. 6.

et preterea nihil [a voice and nothing more].[1] Look at those most unspeakable jingles [2] that I have sent you; and see the whole fruit of my labours since I wrote last. I declare it is shameful in myself; and barbarous in those stupid louts that waste my time away in this drivelling. Here was the best-natured and opaquest of Glasgow Merchants with me for a whole week! He talked and — But why should I trouble you with it? Simply I say this must not last. In a few weeks I shall be done with that blessed Treatise on Geometry; and then, if I do not *attempt* at least, I deserve to die as a fool dieth.

These are shadows: let us turn to the sunshine. The siege of Carcassonne will hardly do, I fear; tho' you show a right spirit in aiming at it. The persecution of the Albigenses has little to distinguish it from other persecutions more connected with our sympathies, except a darker tinge of bloody-mindedness, and a degree of callous ferocity which would tend rather to disgust the mind, than to inflame or exalt it. Simon de Montford and Fouquet are horrible rather more than tragical. To be sure the Count is a fine subject: but there are no peculiar incidents to work upon, and to paint the manners and feelings of those people, even if they were worth painting, would involve you in long laborious researches which would yield no fruit proportionate to the toil of gathering it. I rather advise you therefore, to dismiss the subject altogether. Yet if you feel any deep emotions, see any magnificence of accompaniment which you could combine with it, — tell me, and I will search you out all the in-

[1] "Plutarchi Opera Moralia" (Dan Wyttenbach), i. 649.

[2] One of these is Carlyle's "Wish" (see Appendix A, No. 7); another was "Lines on the Bass" (not preserved).

formation possible. So much depends on the natural bent of your own inclination — it is so important to have this along with you in whatever you undertake, that a suggestion of your own should be preferred under many disadvantages to one from any other. A subject from our own history would answer best — if we must have a historical subject. But why not one of pure invention? Or why not try a Comedy, originating wholly incidents and characters from yourself?

You do not mention what Play of Schiller's you are reading, or whether I can help you in it at all. You also forgot to select any *theme* for our next poetical effort; a speculation, in which, tho' as I have said you are going to leave me entirely behind, I feel determined to go on with. What if we trust to Fortune next time, and engage only to write *something* — name not given? — I hope you will not keep me long: it was very kind in you to think of my wishes, and send the *first* volume[1] the moment it was finished. I would not harass you or burden you however with my impatience; write to me when you *can;* only think, if I were an absolute monarch, *how* often I would have you write.

Are you never coming back to Edinburgh? Some moments I am seized with the most vehement desire to see you once more; at other times I am very quiet. — But surely I must conclude this most ugly and absurd of Letters. I beg you to believe that I have not been so stupid for six months — sore throat, &c, &c, have quite undone me for some days. — You will write when you have done with *Bracebridge Hall*, and send me your verses. The rest of *Sismondi*, I shall transmit forth-

[1] Of "Sismondi."

with. — If you cannot conveniently read Washington [Irving] without further cutting the leaves — do it without scruple.

Farewell! I am half-asleep — so excuse my blunders and miserable penmanship.

I am always yours,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

LETTER 21

Miss Welsh to T. Carlyle, Edinburgh

HADDINGTON, 'Early in July, 1822.'

MY DEAR SIR, — I do not like to detain *Washington*[1] longer or I would not write to you today, being, as usual, in a hurry. I have no verses to send you; I have not even finished the second volume of *Sismondi;* — in short, I have had a relapse. But really I am not to blame for this second idle fit: for several days I had headache; and then I was annoyed with a most prosaic W. S. [Writer to the Signet, a Scottish Lawyer], who intimated to me by post that tho' he had spent *five years* without beholding the light of my countenance, he could not exist any longer without seeing me always. I was under the necessity of delivering my opinion of his project; and that occupied more time than you, who are not plagued with those things, can imagine. And even after I had answered his ridiculous Letter, I could not learn my lesson; for I knew him to be a stubborn hot-headed blockhead; and there is a deep mill-pond within a minute's walk of his

[1] "Bracebridge Hall," by Washington Irving.

house. He has continued to pester me with Letters, in which he tells me it is my duty to run my head into a halter because "the greatest woman the world ever produced (Madame de Staël) was *twice married.*" Will you believe it? this unanswerable argument has had no effect on me, and I have really lost my temper with an admirer of my darling Wilhelmina. On Saturday he sent me a packet containing two little old odd-looking crumpled Notes he received from me *six years ago;* with a tattered black-satin work-bag, and some more lady-like trumpery he had come by (God knows how!). I have almost forgiven him the trouble and uneasiness he has cost me, in consideration of this budget of "memorials" which have kept me laughing ever since I received them. Do not be angry at my levity; if I thought his heart much in the matter, I would speak of him seriously; or rather I would not speak of him at all. He has got a house and some money lately, and he wants an *agreeable* young woman to look after the cooking of his victuals, and the strings and buttons on his waistcoats. He is far better without *me*, seeing that no creature could digest such puddings as I should make, or wear apparel of my stitching.

I am quite delighted with your lines on the Bass. I would rather be the author of these than of all the lines I ever wrote. Oh, if I had your *genius*, your learning, and my own ambition, what a brilliant figure I should make!

Are you not pleased with *Bracebridge Hall?* He is a witty, amiable sort of person Mr. Irving; but Oh, he wants fire; and he is *far too happy* for me. Dear Byron, sinner as he is, there is nobody like him. I have got his likeness; better done than the

one I had. I can scarcely help crying when I look at it and think I may chance to go out of the world without seeing its original. What nonsense! —Talking of great men, Mr. Nichol performed in our pulpit the Sunday before last. After expatiating on the propriety of speaking truth, and the folly of babbling out the whole truth in all times and in all places, he lost the thread of his discourse, or rather (as my Grandfather would say) he *burbled*[1] it, and made an awful pause of some minutes. The congregation hid their faces; my Mother was seized with a violent pain in her back; and for me, my heart bolted into my throat and almost choked me. At last to our great relief, he left that division of his *head* and proceeded to the next. — I was almost forgetting to tell you that I was nearly killed last night. In trying to prevent Dr. Fyffe seeing my ankles, I lost my balance, and fell from the top of a very high wall. My head proved thicker than I fancied; for tho' I struck it on some stones, it sustained no damage. But I lost my gown in the cause, and two of my front teeth. I am bearing this double misfortune with great philosophy, so you need not vex yourself about it; the less, as one-half of it is not true, — my teeth being all in my head. What is become of Edward Irving? I have not heard from him these six weeks. His silence is quite unaccountable. I have been thinking of a subject for you. Will you try it? an Address to Lord Byron from his Daughter. If she is a genius, she might be writing verses by this time. Those people are always in my head. I began to think yesterday, in Church, of his child's feelings towards him, and when the people rose to

[1] Bungled; from Fr. *barbouiller*.

pray I continued sitting. I did not wake out of my dream till the Dr. prayed God to carry us in safety to our respective places of abode; and then I saw all the people staring at me. — Do not send any more of *Sismondi* till I have finished the volume I have. I wish you may be able to decipher this scrawl. My pen is bad as usual. I am going to a detestable Tea-party. Yours affectionately,

JANE WELSH.

LETTER 22

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

3, MORAY STREET, 13th July, 1822.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I am sorry to own that I have not written a single line of poetry or even of metre, since the time you last heard from me. Indolence and excessive occupation, and stupidity both of my own and from others, have held me in complete bondage. In obedience to your injunctions, I did my best endeavour to conceive the feelings of poor little Ada,[1] and throw some ornament over them; I had even proceeded so far as to *intend* saying something of the Stork with her bosom torn up to feed her young, of the Greenland bear whose cubs the English sailors interfered with — greatly to their cost; and I *intended* to draw a very notable moral from the whole: but alas! — just as I was beginning, the "Devil" came for *copy*, the Bullers came and wanted some arrangement (which is not made yet) about their boys, and lastly

[1] Lord Byron's daughter. For Miss Welsh's Lines on this subject, see Appendix A, No. 8.

Irving came, and leaving his worthy tho' at times somewhat tiresome companion to my charge — went Eastward as you know for better entertainment.

Under these circumstances, I should hardly have presumed to trouble you at present, but that I feared you might want the other volume of *Sismondi*, which I would have you finish before taking up anything else; and that I am your debtor for a charming Letter which ought to have been acknowledged long ere now. I was very sulky when this favour reached me: but the perusal of it dashed every cloud from the mind, and left me cheerful as Summer; it has amused and enlivened me every time I have thought of it since. Your Tragi-comedy of the W. S. is quite a perfect thing; and related with the same easy gracefulness, with which it was originally transacted on your part. What a touching scheme of life the man of Law had laid out for himself! A little money and a house already — wanted only an "agreeable" young woman to look after the cooking of his victuals and the darning of his stockings: — and all this, you (cruel beauty!) have levelled with the earth by one fatal *no*! Seriously, I could pity the Notarius; but his presumption exceeds all measure. A thousand masters of conveyancing and even of the mystery of Tongue-fence may wed, and grow rich, and eat meat, and die and be annihilated; and the world no jot the better or worse; but one true-minded woman of genius — accomplished in character and understanding, as you may yet be, if you will, — is a more important object in the Universe, worth more in the estimate of genuine taste, than all the Lawyers that have flourished from Ulpian and Trebonian inclusive down to this very Writer to

his Majesty's Signet! I do not *praise* you therefore because you have *denied:* but it does delight me to see such things.

At the first glance of your *fall*, I formed a hasty wish that Dr. Fyffe had been in much hotter quarters than so civil a gentleman deserves. I am happy to learn from Irving that you feel no worse. Let me beg of you, however, to undertake no such experiment in future. Next to the misery of wedding a prosaic Lawyer would be that of dying in the very bud as it were; while the beautiful creation of intellect and fancy, which all your friends are looking for, continues still *in prospectu.* It is hard to die at any time: but at such an age, and for such a cause — ! — I do entreat you to make no hazards of that nature any more.

I spoke of your powers being *in prospectu:* I am happy to be again reminded, and convinced if I had needed conviction, that the period of fulfilment is drawing near and nearer. Those verses you have sent me are proofs at once of your genius and diligence. You can already versify with great ease and correctness; and where you commit yourself to the expressions of your own feelings, the result might please a far harsher critic than I am. The "Lines written at Midnight"[1] have something in them which is to me exceedingly beautiful and pathetic: I have read them over often; and found much to admire and not one expression to blame. You seem at present to be following the proper course; acquiring the ready command of your pen — which is fully one-half of a good education, and gathering fresh knowledge and new feelings from every source that can afford you any. This is the

[1] See Appendix A, No. 9.

other half of education; and, without the former, comparatively of little value: with it, you make the individual all that Nature meant him to be; and the meanest individual if so trained would cease to be mean. I know not of any definite *plan* of reading that would suit your case better than any other; you are well employed if you are conversing with great minds or contemplating exalted thoughts at all: yet it strikes me that your present materials of study are in danger of leading you too much away from actual things; and of preventing your acquirements of those solid foundations of real knowledge, on which the right conduct of life equally with the right employment of the mental power must all be built. I recollect of recommending history to you more than once: I still look upon it as the most instructive and interesting of all studies; equally improving to the understanding the imagination and the heart. What if you should re-commence Hume, when Sismondi is finished; and so make a complete and memorable Summer of the present? You might write a sonnet upon every exalted character you fell in with, an essay upon every striking national change; you would have a *real* scene before you, in which to insert the production of your fancy, from which to draw your opinion of men and things; and I am certain, from my confidence in the strength of your judgement and the reasonableness as well as force of your emotions, that you might thus open up to yourself an almost boundless store of mental nourishment — of new objects to study, new characters to admire, and to admire more strongly because more definitely and rationally than any one can admire those poetical and fictitious heroes and

scenes with which at present your interior world is chiefly replenished. I express myself badly, but I mean something which I feel convinced is very reasonable; so I beg you to consider it maturely. I see a niche in the Temple of Fame — still vacant or but poorly filled — which I imagine your powers will yet enable you, if so cultivated, to occupy with glory to yourself and profit to others — and that as a proper *woman;* which is more than our favourite De Staël ever did. "*Nous sommes tous deux* déguisés *en femme*" [we are both *disguised* as women] — was one of Talleyrand's jokes, and not without some justice, against Delphine (thought to represent Wilhelmina herself, Madame Vernon representing Talleyrand). — But, like poor Nichol, I am *burbling* my discourse. Besides my paper is done, and I had a thousand other things to say. Send me all the verses you have written — with *any* Letter, the first day you have time to write one. I give out no subject of versification; I have no right, being a *craven* at present; and besides, except on great occasions, it is best to leave that part of it, I find, to the direction of *whim.* Above all, tell me *when* I shall see you: consider, I have been a "reasonable person" for a very long period now — about half-a-year as I reckon; and a few more such periods will put us both — God only knows where! I am not going to dun you and vex you with this matter, however: I felt just now as if I could promise never to see you more — if you required it of me. God bless you my dearest friend, whether I see you or not!

I am ever yours,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

You will rejoice to learn that I am positively to be done with this most wearisome *Legendre* next week. Till the Bullers take up house, at least, I shall then have a short period of comparative freedom to write verses or do what I please. — Tell me what you think of *Sismondi*. I perfectly agree with your view of Washington [Irving] — a smooth polished clever amiable man — excellent for an acquaintance — but for a bosom friend — *no!*

Letter 23

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

3, Moray Street, Thursday, 'End of July or beginning of Aug., 1822.'

My dear Friend, — Unless some one has anticipated me in regard to this "Voice from St. Helena," I calculate on furnishing you with some amusement, by introducing you to the sound of it. O'Meara's work presents your favourite under somewhat of a new aspect: it has increased my respect for Napoleon, and my indignation against his *Boje*. Since the days of *Prometheus Vinctus*, I recollect no spectacle more moving and sublime, than that of this great man in his dreary prison-house; given over to the very scum of the species to be tormented by every sort of indignity, which the heart most revolts against; — captive, sick, despised, forsaken; — yet rising above it all, by the stern force of his own unconquerable spirit, and hurling back on his mean oppressors the ignominy they strove to load him with. I declare I could almost love the man. His native sense of honesty, the rude genuine strength of his intellect, his lively fancy, his

sardonic humour, must have rendered him a most original and interesting companion; he might have been among the first writers of his age, if he had not chosen to be the very first conqueror of any age. Nor is this gigantic character without his touches of human affection — his simple attachments, his little tastes and kindly predilections — which enhance the respect of meaner mortals by uniting it with their love. I do not even believe him to have been a very wicked man; I rather — But it is needless to keep you from the book itself with this *palabra*. Send me word if you would like to see the second volume; which in the affirmative case you shall have, so soon as Mrs. Buller has done with it. This lady likes Napoleon even better than you do; made a pilgrimage to his grave, stole sprigs of willow from it, &c; and called him the greatest of men in the presence of Mr. Croker himself. I am sorry however that I cannot bring her to a right sense of Byron's merit; she affirms that none admire that nobleman, so much as boarding-school girls and young men under twenty — which she reckons a sure sign of his being partly a *charlatan*.

I have some doggerel translations, &c, which I meant to send; but they are not fit to be seen by you — perhaps never will. When shall I get your productions? I have no right to be impatient but these three weeks have seemed very long.

I am not happy at present; and for the best of reasons, I stand very low in my own esteem. Something must be done, if I would not sink into a mere driveller. For the last three years I have lived as under an accursed spell — how wretched, how vainly so, I need not say. If nothing even now is to come of it, then I had better have been anything but what

I am. But talking is superfluous: I only beg for a little respite, before you mark me down forever, as an unhappy dunce, distinguished from other dunces only by the height of my aims and the clamour of my pretentions. — Will you not write to me soon? It were a kind act. I am always,

Your affectionate friend,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

LETTER 24

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

(*Forwarded to Fort Augustus*).

3, MORAY STREET, 11th September, 1822.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I returned to Edinburgh four days ago,[1] in order to take my appointed place in the Family of the Bullers; and tho' confused and stupefied by the many changes which this arrangement has introduced into my condition, I cannot allow my present inept and tenebrific state of mind any longer to prevent me from informing you that I am still in the land of the living, still full of zeal to serve you, and more anxious than ever to hear some tidings of you. If during these six weeks, so trifling a matter as I or my Letters ever formed the object of your contemplation, you may sometimes perhaps have imputed this long silence to anger at the sharp Note[2] you sent hither the day before I left Town. My first care is to assure you that it was not so. The only anger I felt on that occasion was directed against myself, for having even inadver-

[1] From a month's holiday at Mainhill.

[2] The "sharp Note" has not been preserved.

tently given you a moment's vexation; and I still protest my entire and cheerful submission to your dictates in this as in every other circumstance connected with our correspondence. Be sole and absolute mistress of its laws, only *do not renounce it!* When I commit some great crime I shall deserve that punishment; and then I give you leave to inflict it — if not till then. As it is, every new day but shows more forcibly what a treasure I possess in your friendship, every new character I study but reveals some new superiority in yours; and the more calmly I reflect on the nature of our relation to each other, the more clearly do I perceive how fraught with enjoyment and profit our intercourse might prove to me, without harm or blame to either of us. I would fain avoid heroics, I know your wicked laugh when I transgress in that particular: it is enough therefore to say that I long for the continuance of our correspondence with more earnestness than I have been accustomed to feel of late for any blessing that my life held out to me, and still entertain the fixed hope that in after days we shall never repent having trusted each other so far.

I purposed while in Annandale to have a long series of poems ready for your perusal against my return — to have shaped for myself some plan of regular exertion during winter — perhaps even to have traced out the outline of some Book which I might commence the writing of without delay. Alas! that it should be so much easier to purpose than to execute! So far as regards any intellectual object, the period of my rustication has in truth proved a total blank; and the best I am able to say of it is, that it passed away pleasantly if not profitably; and innocently — in the exercise of simple and genuine affections — tho' un-

dignified either by the contemplation or the execution of any great enterprise whatever. I chatted whole days with my kind and true-hearted Mother, listened with no small interest to the rude sterling genius of my Father, made the younkers sing to me or tell me their "travel's history" since we had parted, and strove by every method in my power to give old Care the slip for at least one month of my life. Not that I succeeded absolutely either. By times the Enemy would fasten on me fiercely and tell me that I was but a drivelling sluggard, that all I longed for most on Earth was fleeting fast away from my hold and I not even making an effort to grasp it. Sad truths! but what did they avail me? I tried rhyming repeatedly, but it would not answer. Once I had reached the third stanza of a hymn on the Battle of Morgarten; another time I commenced an Address to the Kirk of Durisdeer — the aspect of which as I saw it planted so calmly in the sunshine on the hill-side, with its simple belfry, its churchyard, and the lowly cottages around it, might have caused my passing eye to linger on it, even if I had not recollected a certain *sermon* written there; but nothing of the sort would prosper in my hands. Not even the Glenkens of Galloway, which Burns asserted might make a poet of a blockhead, could inspire me. I still recollect the view which burst on Brother Jack and me as we rode steadily over the brow of Kinnick — the vast and solemn amphitheatre of stern heathy granite mountains rising in successive ridges behind each other, with a black pall of storms overshadowing the peaks of the highest and hindmost — the blue melancholy lakes, the solitary streams that glanced and winded among the rocks below us — all this is still fresh in the tablets

of the mind; but what does it produce there? I could almost break forth in tears when I think of the wild and lonely grandeur of my Mother Earth — but that were mawkish; or in songs of wonder — but words fail me, and so I live with a "most voiceless thought."[1] Since returning to Edinburgh, I have toiled in one continued scene of bustling and disquietude, perplexed and confused by the change of my condition to a degree that renders all exertion of the understanding or the fancy quite a hopeless undertaking. By degrees, I trust, some regularity may be introduced into my proceedings; in hours of leisure I even yet hope to effect something permanent before winter expires; but for my late operations, as the case stands at present, I must submit to your rebukes, and for my future projects implore your good wishes and your pity.

With yourself, my dear Friend, I feel assured that things are widely different. Long ere now you must have finished *Tasso*, *Maria*,[2] *Wallenstein*, and many others of the sort; and I already anticipate the pleasure of perusing the ample collection of poems and essays which you must have composed since our parting. Tell me all that you have done, and all that you intend doing. I consider my own credit as partly implicated in your progress; I have pledged myself as to the extent of your natural endowments, and if I do not live to see you by far the most distinguished female of all I ever knew, I shall die disappointed. Go on then, and prosper! The career you have chosen is beset with griefs and dangers; but it is the career of the great and noble-minded: the very wish to be numbered among

[1] "Childe Harold," canto iii. v. 97.

[2] Schiller's "Maria Stuart."

those Elect of the world is honourable; how glorious to have it gratified! At some future day, you will recollect these predictions — with a feeling towards me that I would not sell for the favour of kings. May it soon arrive, and long continue!

I know not whether you regard this late seeming negligence of mine in the light of a merit or a fault. If in the latter, I pray that mercy may be mingled with justice; for I am dying to hear from you. How easy were it to make a packet of your compositions, and send me a long frank charming Letter with it any day you liked. I wait your time — patiently as I am bound: only do not keep me longer than is needful, and remember me when you estimate the need.

It is many a month since I saw or heard of your Mother: yet I well recollect the time I passed near her; it seems to grow brighter as it removes. Present my affectionate respects to her, and my hope to show sometime that I have not forgot her kindness. — Excuse this most inane and bombastic epistle; think how it was written, and believe that the sentiments it is meant to convey are true, tho' the dress of them is awkward. I shall write more rationally next time, but cannot be more sincerely

Your Friend,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

LETTER 25

Miss Welsh to T. Carlyle, Edinburgh

ARDACHY, FORT AUGUSTUS, 24 Sep., 1822.

MY DEAR SIR, — I was looking to the South and wondering if any living creature thought on me,

when your Letter was put into my hand. Never did Letter meet a warmer welcome. It was so unexpected and so different from anything I have read or heard these many weeks! Not a word of hogs, cheviots, Falkirk Fairs, or the Caledonian Canal! You cannot think how well I liked it.

My Mother and I have been here a month, and intend remaining another week. I anticipated much enjoyment from our journey hither; but alas! the wind blew, and the rain fell, and I was cold, wet and wofully sick. From Glasgow to Fort William I lay on the deck of the steamboat, praying to be again on *terra firma*, and heedless of the magnificent scenery through which we passed. Everything is ordered for the best: had I been at all comfortable, I should assuredly have fallen in love — deeply, hopelessly in love with a handsome fascinating Colonel of the Guards, who held an umbrella over me for four-and-twenty hours. You will wonder how I escaped when I tell you this charming stranger is intimately acquainted with Lord Byron and enjoyed the friendship of our own De Staël. I never saw his like: he is all heart and soul; with the look of a prince and the manners of a courtier. I could have wept at parting with him, but I could not get at my handkerchief without unbuttoning my Boat-cloak, and that was inconvenient.

I am delighted with this country. My Cousin's house stands near the top of Loch Ness, in the midst of a bright green lawn as smooth as velvet. The Tarff flows down from Corryarrick through a deep wooded glen behind the house, and forms the boundary of this verdant spot; steep wooded braes rise on the opposite side of the river; and behind these the vast range of heathy mountains that forms the

Northern boundary of the great valley. A few yards from the house there is a bridge across Glen Tarff, the most romantic thing I ever saw. I sit there whole hours admiring Loch Ness with its gigantic ramparts of bold mountains, and the beautiful little Fort Augustus, and the green braes where Cumberland encamped with his ten thousand men after the Battle of Culloden. I have seen the ancient Castles of Dunolly and Dunstaffnage situated on bold rocks that overhang the sea. I have passed over the dreary moor of Inverlochy where Montrose and his gallant followers fought and conquered, and have admired the stern grandeur of its Castle older than memory where King Achaius signed the famous league with Charlemagne. I have seen Ben Nevis, the king of Mountains, and various other Bens and Craigs and Corries, that I am neither learned enough to spell nor poet enough to paint. I have skirted the chain of lochs that lie in the bosom of the great valley; I have read the ungrammatical inscription on Glengarry's monument of the seven heads. I have visited the Falls of Foyers, of Tarff, of Moriston; — in short (to use my Highland Cousin's words), I have been at all the knowes and *dubs* in the country.

Of all I have seen what I admire the most is Foyers. It is worth travelling a thousand miles to see the magnificent scenery around the Falls. No description can convey an idea of its rude bold grandeur. While I stood on a projecting point betwixt stupendous rocks that seemed to have been torn asunder by some horrible convulsion, I shuddered as if I looked upon an earthquake; and had not one of our party drawn me from the brink of the rock, I verily believe I should have

thrown myself into the gulf beneath from absolute terror.

I am glad to hear of your idleness: had you been diligent I should have been ashamed to tell you how I have spent the last six weeks. Since I came to the Highlands, my time has been entirely occupied in visiting and seeing sights; and for a fortnight before we came here, I followed the King[1] as if my happiness here and hereafter depended on getting a sight of him. I heard and saw much; dressed, walked and rode till my limbs could scarce support me, but as to reading, writing, or thinking, nobody had any time for that. I enjoyed the bustle pretty well at first, but my spirits were soon below changeable, and I was heartily glad to get out of Town. — By the bye I have got a new friend.[2] I intend filling a sheet with his merits, so I shall say nothing of him at present. — During my stay in Town, I spent a week with Mr. Terrot. I like him more than ever. — I have something to tell you that will awaken your pity for me. The day I spent in Glasgow, a Cousin of mine came to spend the evening with us. In the course of conversation he said he had been at Church that afternoon with a very interesting foreigner whom he was sure I would like. I asked his name, and the provoking wretch answered me with the utmost composure, "Baron de Staël!"[3] Will you believe it? I cried

[1] George IV, who spent the latter half of August, 1822, in Edinburgh. Miss Welsh came into the City "to see the King," as she tells Miss Eliza Stodart. — See "Early Letters of Jane Welsh Carlyle," p. 73.

[2] His name does not appear in these letters; but in the "Early Letters of J. W. Carlyle" the same person is referred to as "Benjamin B." — See *post*, Letters 27, 40.

[3] Son of Madame de Staël.

with downright vexation. To have been within a few minutes' walk of a person I would have given all my rings and necklaces to see! And my own Cousin to have been so fortunate, who cares not though Madame de Staël had never been! It was past ten, or I would have sent him in search of him that night. And so I left Glasgow in an infernal steamboat without getting one glimpse of Baron de Staël!

I daresay you will not thank me for this Letter: it is so stupid and so illegible. There is not a soul in the house that can mend a pen. — Do not write till you hear of me from Haddington; for it is uncertain where I may be for the next fortnight.

Your very sincere friend,
JANE WELSH.

LETTER 26

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

3, MORAY STREET, Friday, 'Oct., 1822.'

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I should not have disobeyed your commands about not writing again till I heard from you, had it not been that the Bullers are greatly in want of O'Meara, — which accordingly I have promised to give them tomorrow. If you want to examine the Book farther, tell me, and I will send you another copy.

I thank you a thousand times for your Highland Letter. It is the most elegant, lively, kind, mischievous little thing I ever read. I do not believe there are three men in Edinburgh that have such a correspondent as I have. Heaven grant I may long be so happy!

You are not to write tomorrow unless perfectly at leisure. That were to defraud me of a pleasure which I have been calculating on for the last three weeks; and which I am as loth as ever to forgo. What *are* the merits of your new friend? — that the old may try to rival him — or if that be hopeless, at least to love him. Tell me also what your plans are for the Winter — what you wish to study or to write: above all, tell me how in some shape or other I may be of service to you. Do not neglect to send me your verses: but for your concurrence I am almost ready to abandon that enterprise forever. Witness those truly Della-cruscan lines from the "German of Goethe."[1]

There is a new periodical Work[2] coming out; in which it is said Byron is to take a large share. It will be the cleverest performance extant in that case. I will send it to you whenever it arrives.

Excuse this feeblest and stupidest and most hurried of Notes. I am going to submit to you all my views and projects, the very first day I may. — Believe me to be at all times

Most affectionately yours,
T. Carlyle.

I fear you will not care about Milman's Poems. I send them only by way of *vehicle:*[3] and it is no matter when they be returned.

[1] Faust's Curse, published in the "Athenæum," 6 Jan., 1832. See Appendix A, No. 10.

[2] The "Liberal."

[3] *I. e.*, for carrying this Letter which did not go by post, but by coach parcel along with the book.

Letter 27

Miss Welsh to T. Carlyle, Edinburgh

Haddington, Thursday, 'Oct., 1822.'

My dear Sir, — I should not think you unreasonable tho' you were in very bad humour with me at present. This unfortunate O'Meara! It was the merest chance he was not sent to extend his localities in the Highlands. I would have returned the Book immediately, finding how long it had been here, had the subject been any other than Napoleon. However I made what haste I could with it; but tho' I read whenever a temporary cessation of civilities on the part of the inhabitants left a minute at my own disposal, I only finished it at twelve o'clock the night you wrote for it. I meant to send a Note with it in the morning, but I never awoke till the coach was ready to start. Mrs. Buller likes Napoleon better than I do! How do you know that? I do not think any human being can love and admire him more than I do. When a mere child I could have sacrificed my life to free him from captivity, and win for my name one line in the history of his life. Do not in future make such gratuitous assertions.

I liked Milman's Book better than your scanty recommendation led me to expect. The gentleman is certainly a Poet. He excels in description; the outlines of his pictures want character; but his colouring is rich and brilliant, and on the whole his manner is very graceful. He fails sadly when he makes his personages speak and feel. However, the "Bright City"[1] is not without heart.

[1] "Samor, Lord of the bright City," by the Rev. H. H. Milman, published, London, 1818.

The episode of Lilian and Vortimer is very natural and pathetic; and Rowena's love is quite Byronical. I think if you have not read it, it is worth your time. How very presumptuous it is in me to attempt criticising such an author as Milman!

We only came home a week ago; my heart has never been glad since: the atmosphere here is as heavy as lead. Several deaths had happened during our absence: all the faces we met looked sorrowful,—all but my little Shandy's. He received us with the most ecstatic joy, capering, whining, worrying my gloves, and performing such rapid evolutions on the floor, that I really feared for his *intellect*. Were it not for the magic in that word *home* which rivets the heart to the spot where it first beat, I verily believe I should emigrate to the North. Oh! the land of hills, glens and warriors! the wild romantic grandeur forms such a contrast with our flat wearisome cornfields; and the people there are so frank, natural and true-hearted! so different from the cold, selfish, well-bred beings one lives among!

I was very fond of the military people in the Fort. One lady in particular. She vowed everlasting friendship for me, and we have commenced a correspondence since my return. She is about twice my age, and twice my size; fat, frank, lively, and kind-hearted; with a considerable share of Highland pride and not one spark of *genius* or romance in her composition. I can give no other reason for liking her than that she likes me.

Nothing worth recording occurred on our way home, except that one of our horses, named "Lady Ann" (after Lady Ann Fraser, I presume) committed a cruel outrage on a duck on the streets of Elgin. We spent a day at Fort George, and three

days in Inverness during the Northern Meeting.[1] I was introduced to the King of the Isles who is worth knowing as a curiosity of folly. He told a friend of mine who was blaming him for not uncovering his head in the presence of his Sovereign," That the people made kings, but only God Almighty made *a Chief!!*"

We were two days in Aberdeen. Our *one* acquaintance there, to whom my Mother had written our intention of returning that way, was disabled from attending us. On the preceding day, elated with the hope of seeing us so soon, he performed a somersault over a horse seventeen hands high, and cracked a stone with the back of his head.

The most unpleasant part of our journey was a night we spent in the Star Inn at Perth. They brought us for supper a feathered hen that might have laid eggs in the reign of George Second; and gave us a bed in which we were nearly drowned by the rain that poured in through the ceiling. — I daresay you are sick to death of my travels; but I assure you, to me the subject is very interesting.

Now, for my new friend, who had almost escaped my memory. What shall I begin with? His height? I think *it* was what I first remarked. Well, he is about six feet two, rather slender and very graceful; his features are not regularly handsome; but his countenance is extremely pleasing and intelligent. He dresses somewhat fantastically, wears an amethyst ring on one of his fingers, a steel chain with a very ingenious, portable perspective (to denote he is an artist), and shining black-leather belt, with silver lions' heads in front. In spite of all this his exterior is gentleman-like and without

[1] The Gathering of the Highland Clans.

puppyism; and his manner elegant and highly polished, without affectation. His judgement is accurate; his taste exquisite; and he is gifted with a very quick perception of the ridiculous. He has read twice as much as most young men of his age; but his studies do not seem to have been properly directed, nor has his mind sufficiently digested the knowledge it has acquired. He is clever, enterprising, and ambitious. That expression of yours, "*All in good time*," is never heard from *his* lips. I recommended him to study German one Saturday, he commenced it under a master on Monday, and by the Monday following he had read half of one of Schiller's Plays. I think he is affectionate; for he loves to talk about his Mother, who is one of the loveliest women in Edinburgh, and famed for her superior understanding. In short he is no every-day person; — but he has no *genius*. I have just seen him twice!! — Our acquaintance commenced three months ago: we rode to Presmenen Lake; a beautiful rider he is! And his practice of looking in the heavens for cumuli and strata and nonsense, affords him many opportunities of displaying his horsemanship at the risk of his neck. On his return to Town he sent me "Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity," Reynolds' Works, and some sketches for my album executed by himself in a masterly manner. A fortnight after, he rode with me to Lammerlaw; and behold our whole acquaintance! He set out for London the day after the King's landing; — set out, tho' he might have supposed I would be in Town that very day! — He is gone to Germany and Italy: it will be eighteen months before he returns. No matter.

You ask me my plans for Winter, and what I wish to study or to write. At present my life is

without a plan, — I may almost say without an aim. I wish to study everything; and to write poems, novels, tragedies, essays, &c, &c, &c. These last two months of idleness have done me a deal of mischief: I cannot study seriously for an hour. I have even forgot the way to rhyme. I shall die in a few years without having written anything, — die and be forgotten. Do take my case into consideration, and tell me what to do. — Write me a long Letter as soon as you like, and let me know all your designs. It is with a feeling of regret you would scarcely give me credit for, that I see your days fleeting away unmarked by one struggle for immortality. Oh, if I had your talents, what a different use I would make of them! But I will not blame you; for you seem sufficiently sensible of the sinfulness of your own inactivity.

I was horrified the other day to find Lord Byron's Letter among my Books; how it happened to be there God only knows; for I am firmly persuaded I returned it to you three months ago.

The Newspapers may have informed you of poor Benjamin's[1] death. We have long anticipated this result of his illness; and have no cause to regret it. . . .

Send me all your verses; and tell me, are those on the Night-moth a translation? — I send you some lines that I want your opinion of. Upon my honour they are *not* my own. I will tell you the author when you have told me what you think of them. —

Your sincere friend,

JANE BAILLIE WELSH.

[1] Miss Welsh's uncle, Dr. Benjamin Welsh.

Letter 28

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

3, Moray Street, Monday, 'End of Oct. or Early in Nov., 1822.'

My dear Friend, — I know not whether it be that I am grown more *reasonable* of late than formerly, but certain it is that I never in my life felt less inclined to be in "bad humour" with you than at present. For a long while our intercourse, unlike what it once was, has been a source of unmixed pleasure to me; and the present complexion of it, I rejoice to say, seems to afford the hope of its being as permanent as anything so delightful can be expected to be. When you write in the *proper* style, your Letters have a power at once to gratify and to excite me which almost nothing else has: there is always some sharp fillip for my vanities, and some voice to awaken and direct my exertions — something shown me to be done, and something to be avoided; and the whole is accomplished in a manner which might give inanity itself some value. I daresay you wonder at these salutary effects of your compositions; yet I do not over-rate the matter but the contrary. Last Friday, for instance, what a fine bright region of dreams arose over my stagnant imagination, when your Letter was spread out before me! There was the Celt Glengarry, misplaced in these manufacturing times as much as some mammoth or mastodonton would be at the Tryst of Falkirk; then the somersault, and the new mode of splitting rocks invented at Aberdeen; then the tragedy of the Elgin duck, and the venerable poulet

of St. Johnstown[1] — on both of which ill-fated fowls I design to write some elegiac stanzas the first time I feel melancholy enough to do them justice. Nay, even with regard to your *new friend*, tho' viewing him with the "jealous leer malign"[2] so natural in such a case, I could not help admitting him to be a very dashing gallant fellow, and well worth all the attention you have given him and more. I must envy him his equestrian powers, if they often lead him on such journeys as the one to Lammerlaw. Did he write these verses? If so, he seems young at the art, like us, but not without the power of doing better: dactyls are always difficult to manage, and his accordingly are but a kind of flash in the pan — no damage is done; but the other piece has a sort of swaggering *pococurante* air about it which looks more like genius and truth, and answers greatly better. Except the last stanza, they are *good*. If he is only about twenty years of age or so, he may cultivate poetry with considerable hope; if nearer thirty I advise him never to write another line.

But I am wasting my paper with gossipings, forgetful of my chief object in taking up the pen at present. It is very unfortunate for any one to live without a settled plan, still more so for one like you; and happy indeed should I be if any effort of mine could deliver you from such a situation. Nor am I without hope of effecting this purpose: for unless I am greatly mistaken in my estimate of your resources, there is not anything desperate or even very difficult in the case. I know the common error of underrating the difficulties of our neighbour

[1] Old name of Perth.

[2] "Paradise Lost," iv. 503.

as much as we overrate our own: but certainly it seems to me that the proportion between your wishes and your power of accomplishing them is more favourable than with the great majority of the world. Your object is simple — the attainment of intellectual eminence, which you look upon, and justly, as the first of mortal distinctions: your means of attaining it are abundant — a genius which I have often characterised, ardour as yet unabated and domestic comfort in every sense, including a total freedom as well from that heart-breaking isolation, as those thousand vulgar cares about "what you shall eat and what you shall drink or wherewithal you shall be clothed," under which most people labour, and in which the great mass of mankind find a sufficient, sometimes an excessive, occupation all their days. Where then is the difficulty? In your circumstances I imagine I could produce a very glorious result. I would rigidly set apart some hours of every day for the purposes of study; I would read and think and imagine; I would familiarize myself with whatever great or noble thing men have done or conceived since the commencement of civilization — that is I would study their history, their philosophy, their literature — endeavouring all the while not merely to recollect but to apply, not merely to have in my possession but to nourish myself with all these accumulated stores of the Past, and to strengthen my hands with them for adding to the stores of the Future. In about two or at most three years from this date, I would thus have before my mind a distinct and vivid conception of the *manière d'être* of all the great characters that have ever lived — in order to borrow from them whatever beauty could be

imitated in my own character — which is the first great benefit of education; I would have a no less vivid conception of all that is most picturesque or spirit-stirring in the fortunes of our race — all that they have done and endured and discovered — which forms at once the wealth of the imagination and the understanding — the materials on which they operate, and is the other great benefit of education. And in collecting all this mental riches, I would be attentive also to improve my powers of distributing it: I would cultivate the art of composition in its widest meaning; I would write verse and prose, grave things and gay, matters of reasoning and of fancy, according as my humour might direct. After all which long training, I would look forth on the wide empire which I had thus conquered, and acquired the skill to govern; I would select the fairest and finest province in it, which I would cultivate and adorn with all my heart and soul; if I could increase the general inheritance of mankind — how glorious my destiny! — if not, I should at least have longed to do it, I should have travelled through the wilderness of life surrounded with solemn and elevating and noble objects, and I should die with the spirit of a man that had endeavoured well — and only failed because Nature never meant that he should succeed.

In all this I am sensible there is far too much vagueness and generality: it is the impossibility of writing all that might be said on the subject which forces me to sketch only the outline, and leave the filling of it up to a fairer opportunity. If I saw you for two hours — to question and suggest — to consult and discuss by word of mouth, it might be different. In the meantime I cannot avoid again

recommending one branch of study which ought to be at the root of all others, and in which if I mistake not you are still deficient. It is the study of history, the easiest the most entertaining and the most instructive of all; the foundation of which may be laid in a few months, tho' many diligent readers neglect all their lives to lay it. Have you finished Hume yet? Have you ever read Robertson and Gibbon? There are Greece and Rome which well merit your attention, if they have not yet gained it; and a multitude of Authors good and bad are at hand to direct in this undertaking. Did you ever read Plutarch or Vertot or Rollin? You see I know not how to come to particulars: but here is room enough for a great quantity of useful labour, tho' I cannot specify it distinctly. Then for modern times, we have Gibbon (worth reading on other accounts, tho' he is an infidel and a rather heartless person), and Müller and Watson and Sismondi and Lacretelle and a host of others. With regard to philosophy I need not say anything at present — or criticism — or those parts of the sciences which might suit you: there is work enough for a time without them.

Now, my dear Pupil, if you are at all giving ear to this confused sermon of mine, I can easily fancy the state of despondency and helplessness into which it has already cast you. You contemplate a task without limits, in which you know not how to begin, and see not where you shall end. Such feelings are natural but groundless. Give but four hours a-day to serious study — give them constantly faithfully inflexibly — reserving the other twelve for your Mother and your friends and those accomplishments and amusements which befit your sex and

rank: the celerity and success with which you may get thro' the work will far surpass your hopes. What may you not have learned even before Winter is done! It will make you far happier too: for no thinking creature can sit easy under the idea that time, "the stuff that life is made of" continues wasting drop by drop and leaving no trace behind it. I would absolutely set about this undertaking were I in your place, and that without delay. I would make the silly people in my neighbourhood respect my purposes and cease to interfere with their fulfilment. What an arrangement that thoughts and aims directed as it were to eternity itself should be thwarted and obstructed by the shallow movements of people whose only object is to live! Tell them that these four hours are sacred to the hopes of immortality — that you *will* be uninterrupted in the use of them; and they will cease to interrupt you. If any murmur, if any sneer; let them have their humour out: a little while will show who *were* the gainers, and it is only theirs to laugh.

If I conceived less highly of my beloved Pupil, I would prescribe more moderate duties for her: but as matters stand, this sketch contains the rude draft (rude enough certainly) of what in my real opinion were best to be done. You see I have formed a lofty idea of what you are destined to become — a person rich in solid knowledge, and habituated to the use of strong and brilliant faculties. Without this, there may be smartness and show, but no true greatness: you may write elegant trifles, but never show yourself a woman of a sublime and commanding mind. You see also that I exclude the idea of anything like publication for the present. In truth I do not see what should hurry you in this respect.

I am far from insensible to the pleasures of fame: at the same time, it is to *be*, not to *seem*, that one should labour; and if the former is attained the latter will inevitably follow — or may stay if it likes, for then its value is but secondary. What matters it indeed whether another pays you reverence, provided you are sure that at any given moment you *have* force of mind enough to lay him prostrate whenever you think proper? There is even a kind of pleasure in being despised by some blockheads. The certainty you have of their gross blindness, the sense of your own magnanimity in sustaining their injustice, does more than console you for the loss of what in itself is of so very little value. This is a doctrine you will say, peculiar to myself: in fact I would not have you act upon it too largely; but it is fit we be persuaded that worth not currency is the rational object[1] — that if we have the gold the coining of it is a far inferior matter. I cannot call that mind a really great one which does not feel so. Percival Stockdale went nearly altogether mad out of eagerness for the glory which he never could deserve: Lord Bacon calmly entrusted the care of his works "to posterity when two centuries should have elapsed." I conceive that even at present you might write a very amusing novel or light work of that sort; but I should regret to see you do so: it would appear frivolous to yourself at some future day — or what were worse — it might lead your mind into a class of trivial pursuits, and bring about the bad exchange of precocity for strength. Aim rather at something far higher: become a truly accomplished and richly furnished person first; and then what thing is impossible to you?

[1] *Cf.* "Esse, quam videri, bonus malebat" (He preferred to *be* worthy rather than to *seem* so). — SALLUST, "Cat.," 54.

But I must bring this tedious lecture to a close at last: I have managed it so badly that I fear you will find it difficult to make out my project after all I have said about it. The leading idea lies vaguely and indefinitely within my own mind, and of course I explain it obscurely; but I am persuaded of its correctness. I beg you to give the matter your attention seriously, and let me have your views respecting it as soon as possible. If you purpose to let me see your face within any measureable space of time, I promise to make everything clear and precise; if otherwise, I will write till you understand plainly, or grow altogether tired of my stupidity. I would not weary you to death all at once; so I leave it for the present.

It is kind of you to ask after my designs; but your kindness must meet a very unworthy requital. I shall only again vex you with the stupid picture of broken resolutions and empty regrets, of incessant restlessness and no advancement, of most glorious projects and the meanest execution. What an ass! I sit and spin out long plans which it would require a lifetime to complete; I feel astonished at my own temerity when I approach the commencement of them; I falter, I hesitate, and at length give them up in despair. Meanwhile the few sands of existence are hastening away, the noon of life is already fleeting over me, and "the night cometh wherein no man can work." I know I deserve your contempt; I am fast securing my own. It is vain for me to urge in excuse that I must first be liberated from these grinding cares, these ignoble toils, this anxiety about the humblest circumstances of the future, this separation from all kindred minds, this weak and wayward state of health: I

was born to endure these things, and must endure them to the end of time, unless my own hand deliver me; and how shall it deliver me except by previously effecting what I like a child would willingly postpone? Sometimes I candidly believe myself to be the weakest most imprudent driveller now extant.

Four months ago I had a splendid plan of treating the history of England during the Commonwealth in a new style — not by way of regular narrative — for which I felt too well my inequality, but by grouping together the most singular manifestations of mind that occurred then under distinct heads — selecting some remarkable person as the representative of each class, and trying to explain and illustrate their excellencies and defects, all that was curious in their fortune as individuals, or in their formation as members of the human family, by the most striking methods I could devise. Already my characters were fixed upon — Laud, Fox, Clarendon, Cromwell, Milton, Hampden; already I was busied in the study of their works; when that wretched Philomath with his sines and tangents came to put me in mind of a prior engagement,[1] — to obstruct my efforts in this undertaking, and at length to drive them totally away. Next I thought of some work of imagination: I would paint, in a brief but vivid manner, the old story of a noble mind struggling against an ignoble fate; some fiery yet benignant spirit reaching forth to catch the bright creations of his own fancy and breaking his head against the vulgar obstacles of this lower world. But then what knew I of this lower world? The man must be a hero, and I could only draw the

[1] To translate Legendre's Geometry for Dr. Brewster.

materials of him from myself. Rich source of such materials! Besides it were well that he died of love; and your novel-love is become a perfect drug; and of the genuine sort I could not undertake to say a word. I once thought of calling in your assistance, that we might work in concert, and make a new hero and heroine such as the world never saw. Could I have obtained your concurrence? Would to Heaven we could make such a thing! Finally I abandoned the project. — I have since tried to resume the Commonwealth; but the charm of it is gone: I contemplate with terror the long train of preparation and the poorness of the result. Now Boyd the fat Bookseller would give me something like £150 for a solitary life of Milton with Notes on his poems, criticisms, &c, &c: last week I was within an ace of accepting his offer. One thing is certain, I cannot live thus. Tell me, if you can, to what hand I ought to turn me. I am very unhappy often, and deserve to be still more so.

But see! — the bottom of my second sheet! I must check this torrent of egotism, and deliver you from my insipidities at last. When will you write to me again? You are a generous creature, or you would not be troubled with me at all. I must also have some poetry if possible; tho' I have none to give you — for charity itself cannot call by such a name the swashing bombast which I am going to enclose. What put it into your imagination that our unhappy Night-moth was translated? Alas! the poor animal actually perished before my eyes one Summer midnight in the Burgh of Kirkcaldy;[1]

[1] In 1818. The "Night-moth" appears in Carlyle's "Miscellanies," i. Appendix ii. The little poem was also printed in Ottilie von Goethe's "Chaos," in or about 1830; and a corre-

and like Jerry of the Carlisle Newspaper, "*I pat eet aw into langish meesel'*." This, lest posterity should mistake the thing.

I had read the "Bright City," and rejoiced to find your criticism so agreeable to my own. Milman is certainly a poet, but he takes a flight higher than he can sustain. He paints too gorgeously and indistinctly, he also whines too much, he is sometimes even liable to cant. I am astonished at your diffidence in judging him: it were well if he always found even critics by profession so well qualified.

Tomorrow I must try to get you O'Meara: if not, this must go without it, and you shall have the book another time. Byron's Magazine, or rather

spondent in Weimar wrote to me a few years ago that he had discovered "a new Poem *by Mrs. Carlyle*." The copy of the "Night-moth" sent to Weimar *was* in her handwriting, and is still preserved among the Goethe Archives.

It may be added that the verses entitled "To a Swallow building under our Eaves" have also been mistakenly attributed to Mrs. Carlyle. But the fact is that they were written by Carlyle and only transcribed by Mrs. Carlyle. On the back of her copy Carlyle has written "Copied by Jane." The verses are dated "The Desert, 1834." — See Appendix A, No. 17.

A still more curious instance of mistaken authorship occurred a few years ago. When Carlyle sent a lock of his wife's hair to Goethe (see "Correspondence between Goethe and Carlyle," pp. 160–1) he wrote the following quatrain to accompany it:

"For th' Heaven-gifted still an earthly Gift have I!
Some kingly robe, belike? Some jewel priceless-fair?
A Gift no King's nor Crœsus' yellow heaps could buy:
True love from Woman's heart, this tress of Woman's hair!"

It seems that Goethe transcribed this on a sheet of paper, which being found after his death was mistaken for his own composition, and actually printed as his in the Weimar Edition of his Works, 1893. — See the article by Mr. L. L. Mackall, in the "Goethe Jahrbuch," xxv. 1904.

Hunt's, "The Liberal" is arrived in Town; but they will not sell it — it is so full of Atheism and Radicalism and other noxious *isms*. I had a glance of it one evening; I read it through and found two papers apparently by Byron, and full of talent as well as mischief. Hunt is the only serious man in it, since Shelley died: he has a wish to preach about politics and bishops and pleasure and paintings and nature, honest man; Byron wants only to write squibs against Southey and the like. The work will hardly do. If possible you shall see this number.

Once more then I have done. Be patient with this long scribble, for I have sat till midnight writing it, and of course intended it for good. Write me again when you want to make me happy. Adieu, my most valued friend!

T. Carlyle.

Letter 29[1]

Miss Welsh to T. Carlyle, Edinburgh

Haddington, 'Early in November, 1822.'

Many thanks for your long Letter. It has already produced beneficial effects: I have got up at seven these last two mornings. What greater proof can I give you of my good intentions?

I have just this instant finished O'Meara, and have no time to write. You quite distress me by your attention in sending me so many books.

The verses were written by Charles Terrot ! ! ! Do you really think I would have submitted any of my *young friend's* compositions to the inspection

[1] A preliminary note with a book returned.

of such a merciless critic as you? No, no. I have some poetry of *his;* but I like him too well to show it to you.

Yours ever,

JANE WELSH.

LETTER 30

Miss Welsh to T. Carlyle, Edinburgh

HADDINGTON, 11th November, '1822.'

MY DEAR FRIEND, — If ever I succeed in distinguishing myself above the common herd of little Misses, thine will be the honour of my success. Repeatedly have your salutary counsels and little well-timed flatteries roused me from inactivity when my own reason was of no avail. Our meeting forms a memorable epoch in my history; for my acquaintance with you has from its very commencement powerfully influenced my character and life. When you saw me for the first time, I was wretched beyond description: grief at the loss of the only being I ever loved with my whole soul had weakened my body and mind; distraction of various kinds had relaxed my habits of industry; I had no counsellor that could direct me, no friend that understood me; the pole-star of my life was lost, and the world looked a dreary blank.[1] Without plan, hope, or aim, I had lived two years when my good Angel sent you hither. I had never heard the language of talent and genius but from my Father's lips; I had thought that I should never hear it

[1] Some readers will wonder that Edward Irving's name is not mentioned here. The real fact seems to be that his influence over Miss Welsh and her estimation of him approximated very closely to zero. See *infra,* Appendix B, Note Three.

more. You spoke like him; your eloquence awoke in my soul the slumbering admirations and ambitions that *His* first kindled there. I wept to think the mind he had cultivated with such anxious, unremitting pains, was running to desolation; and I returned with renewed strength and ardour to the life that he had destined me to lead. But in my studies I have neither the same pleasures, nor the same motives as formerly: I am *alone*, and no one loves me better for my industry. This solitude together with distrust of my own talents, despair of ennobling my character, and the discouragement I meet with in devoting myself to a literary life, would, I believe, have oftener than once thrown me into a state of helpless despondency, had not your friendship restored me to myself by supplying (in as much as they can ever be supplied) the counsels and incitements I have lost. — You see I am not insensible to the value of your friendship, or likely to throw it away, tho' you have sometimes charged me with inconstancy and caprice.

There is no plainer way of testifying my entire approval of the matter contained in your last Letter than rigidly adhering to the plan you have sketched for me. This I am endeavouring to do. I immediately commenced an active search thro' the libraries of my acquaintance, for some of the books you named. Hume I have commenced and re-commenced so many times, that I cannot now look with patience on a volume of the same shape and colour; therefore I preferred acquainting myself with the History of England through the medium of Clarendon. Clarendon however, is "out of fashion." My next attempt was on Rollin, and that proved more successful. I read his "Ancient

History" in my infancy; but remembered no more of it than the number of volumes. I have already finished the first volume (writing little foolish reflections as I proceed). During the last week I have also read the latter half of "Maria Stuart"; some scenes of "Alfieri"; and a portion of "Tacitus" (which by the way is the hardest Latin I ever saw). When you devoted four hours of my day to the study of History, what did you mean should become of my Italian and my dear, dear German? I have no inclination to part with these; and accordingly I mean to devote four hours more, equally, "*constantly*, *faithfully and inflexibly*" to the study of languages. What is the reason I cannot read the first part of *Wallenstein?* I was just beginning to congratulate myself upon my progress in the German Tongue (*Maria Stuart* was so intelligible), and now I find I know nothing at all about it. Have you ever read *Rosamunda?* If you have not, you never saw woman in a proper rage. Oh! it is a furious bloody business. I think Alfieri must have written it with a live coal in his stomach. I had almost forgot the Curse;[1] I cannot make up my mind about it; my judgement is quite bewildered amid its striking beauties and gross deformities. But tho' I cannot decide upon the work, I *can* upon its author. He must either be the craziest or the most conceited mortal that ever invented rhymes. Nothing but derangement or unbounded admiration of his own genius could have emboldened him to violate as he has done all the laws of criticism and common-sense. I should like well to have conceived the "Curse of Ke-

[1] "The Curse of Kehama," by Robert Southey, published in 1810.

hama"; but I would not have *written* it for a thousand guineas.

I believe I told you I had got a sort of friend in the Highlands. You must understand I had not been at Ardachy a day till I foresaw I should find little favour there *in propria persona;* and so I thought it advisable to play the part of a lively, dashing, good-humoured, thoughtless blockhead of a girl. You cannot think how the character *took:* it won the hearts of the women and turned the heads of all the men in the place. This Mrs. S—— was the *greatest* of my admirers. She showed me so much confidence and kindness, that I really felt exceedingly obliged to her, and inclined to like her as well as I possibly could like so fat a woman. All sorts of civilities were exchanged between us; and at parting we agreed to continue our intercourse by Letters. Accordingly I wrote to her immediately on my return home. But mark the sequel! Yesterday came her answer, cold, short and formal. I could scarce account for the seeming change in her disposition towards me, until I discovered she was actuated by the same spirit as the young lady that *could do something*. She tells me that "she feels her own *inferiority at the pen;* but will always be glad to reply to my Letters in *her own humble way*." She then proceeds to ask my advice about the education of her Daughter, and begs me to look about for a Governess for her. On the same sheet of paper is a Letter from her Husband (an English Officer in the Fort), which begins with, "If you choose to be a bluestocking, do you think or expect we common people can answer you in the same style?" The whole Letter is filled with allusions to my "bluestocking talents" as he is pleased to style writing

grammar. Here is all the kindliness of our intercourse frozen at once by this wretched jealousy. Something like this has been the history of all the attachments I ever formed with women. — However, the episode of the Governess is quite original.

I should like above all things "to make a hero and heroine such as the world never saw." Do let us set about it! The creatures of our joint imaginations will be a most singular mixture of genius and imbecility. Would to God the alacrity of your execution was equal to the boldness of your projects! — Your last verses are very like Campbell's. Pray send me some more: you cannot think what pleasure they afford me. I am ashamed to say I have nothing to send you, even "*in my own humble way.*"

I inserted some of your verses (without your name) in the Album of one of my acquaintances, and I understand they are figuring in the Albums of all the little Ladies and Right Honourables in the County. Are you angry? I assure you no one knows by whom they are written.

Is your history of Faust printed yet? If it is, I wish you would procure me a reading of it. Ah! poor, poor Byron. I, even I, must give him up. Tell me what you have decided on with respect to the proposal of the fat Bookseller. — Write soon.

Your very sincere friend,

JANE WELSH.

Tell me what you think of the critique on William's picture;[1] *and send it back.*

[1] A small painting in oil colours of her uncle William, Dr. Welsh's brother.

Letter 31

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

3, Moray Street, 18th November, 1822.

My dear Friend, — If instead of deriving so much pure enjoyment from our intercourse, I had spent long years of toil and difficulty in your service, the sentiments expressed in your last Letter would be an abundant recompense. I am more than flattered by what you say to me: if I could fairly merit the continuance of such feelings, there are few men I should have cause to envy. The irreparable loss you have sustained is but too well-known to me; I had heard of the virtue and talent of your Father long before I dreamed that you and I should ever be acquainted: the sad and speechless affection with which you cherished his memory was the first feature of your character that struck me; no lovelier one shall I ever discover there. If it were possible that any exertions of mine could never so remotely contribute to perfect what he had so nobly commenced, I should regard our meeting as a blessed incident whatever might betide; I should feel as if this restless, fluctuating, and at times too painful a life had not been given me all in vain. As it is, — with me far more than you, — the day when we first saw each other must be forever memorable. I as little think of classing it among the ordinary dates of my history, as I do of classing you among the ordinary mortals who have happened to become known to me. Such beings I had thought of, perhaps hoped to find; but it was long — very long ago. You speak of advantages and obligations: if I might tell

you all, you would see a very different state of matters. If I might paint to you how wasted and woe-begone I was — a prey to black inquietudes which had made me sick of existence itself and reckless of aught good or evil that it had to offer me, — when I saw you, like an inhabitant of some more blessed sphere, as I almost believed you, descend upon my desolate and dreary path which was fast going down to the gates of Death, — and call me back to light and life, and hopes more glorious than I had ever dared to form;[1] if — But I must not go on with this: you would laugh at me as a "crack-brained enthusiast," or we should have some furious quarrel on the subject, which might last for three months to come. It is enough that I am *very* happy with you: God grant it may always be so!

Your last Letter shows more plainly than ever that except in the pursuit of literature there is no peace for you in this world. Your tastes, your passions are all getting concentrated upon this object: it is the "radiant orb" as Nelson[2] expressed it, which

[1] It is interesting to compare with this sentence the following passage from "Sartor": "Withdrawn, in proud timidity, within his own fastnesses; solitary from men, yet baited by night-spectres enough, he [Teufelsdröckh] saw himself, with a sad indignation, constrained to renounce the fairest hopes of existence. And now, O now! 'She looks on thee.' . . .

"Was she not to him in very deed a Morning-star; did not her presence bring with it airs from Heaven? As from Æolian Harps in the breath of dawn, as from the Memnon's Statue struck by the rosy finger of Aurora, unearthly music was around him, and lapped him into untried balmy Rest. Pale Doubt fled away to the distance; Life bloomed-up with happiness and hope. The past, then, was all a haggard dream." — "Sartor Resartus," Bk. ii. ch. 5.

[2] See the article on Nelson in "Montaigne and other Essays," p. 71, — a book composed of some of Carlyle's early Essays written for Dr. Brewster's "Edinburgh Encyclopædia."

will urge you on thro' every difficulty, and reward you with its splendours at last. I rejoice at your feeling thus. None but a very young or a very stupid person can exist at all without some determinate purpose to fill up the mind; and of all the purposes which engage mortals in this busy Earth I know none so praiseworthy as this. How much more noble is it to obey the impulse of such a generous ambition, wherever it may lead, than to toil and jostle for wealth or worldly precedence, which even when they are gained are but the *symbols* of dignity and are often worn by the basest of mankind! Here, on the other hand, is a free and independent scene of effort, where no low artifice, no pitiful humiliation of the mind can be of any use, where all that is worthiest in our nature finds ample scope, where success is in our own hands, and each addition to our knowledge, each improvement in our sentiments *is* a genuine treasure which the world can neither give nor take away.

My advice to you therefore is not that you should relax in your exertion, or check your ardour — this were to sin against both your permanent interests and your present comfort; — but rather that you should regulate your efforts so that in the end the total result of them may be the greatest possible. Zeal you have in abundance, and talents which when I consider your past opportunities often strike me with wonder; the only thing you want, and it forms a fatal drawback, is the humble but indispensable quality of *regularity*. If you will only engage to form some settled plan of distributing your time, and to adhere to it with unrelenting integrity for half a year, I prophesy that before the end of that period, the beauty of order will have acquired such

charms in your eyes that you will never again deviate from its dictates; and this being given, I take all the rest upon myself: If *my* own Scholar do not become one of the ornaments of her age and country, I am content to forfeit all my critical reputation forever.

Nothing accordingly could give me greater pleasure or better hopes than to find you already sensible of these preliminaries, and already firmly bent on conforming to them. I rejoice that you have commenced seriously to study history; and the best wish I can form for your real progress is that you may persist without flinching. Chance has directed you well: Rollin is as good a book as any other to begin with. Then you may have Gillies' or Mitford's Greece and Ferguson's Rome, then Gibbon; and you are well-equipped for attacking the moderns. You need not take any thought about procuring these works: I can send them all out to you without the slightest difficulty. Why did you not apply to me at once? Does it not furnish me with an excuse for scribbling these long sheets to you, and compel you to talk with me in return? You also do well to take notes — tho' not too largely from so shallow a personage as M. Rollin. Have you got any ancient maps? or a Lemprière's Classical Dictionary? Tell me pointedly. Geography and Chronology have been justly named *the two windows* of History; they are in fact the two first requisites in the study of it — nothing of themselves, but, combined with other advantages, of essential value. I know not whether I have done well to interrupt the steady progress of your reading, by the perusal of this Bossuet's *Histoire Universelle:* you can try a little of it, and if you do not relish it, throw it by.

In about two days you may read all in it that is worth reading: for I advise you totally to pass over all that he says or sings about the Jews and the Church and the Prophecies — it is well for the Bishop of Meaux, but too old by a century for us. When you have fully surveyed this sketch of the whole field of history, then return to fill it up gradually — to study your Rollin with might and main.

These other four hours for languages, &c, I am apprehensive will not answer: it is too much for you; more than you can give, more than you need give. I meant that four hours should serve for all; six hours I consider as the very maximum. You observe I did not include in this allotment the time you may spend in reading novels, poetry, &c; these are amusements and may be followed or suspended as inclination prompts: I stipulated only for a certain portion of your day to be religiously devoted to laborious study, that you should work with all your heart during four hours, and consider a neglect of your appointment as a violation of duty. If you have two hours more which you can give to German, Latin, Italian, so much the better, they may occupy your evenings usefully; but depend upon it two hours are abundantly enough. You laugh at me when I talk of health: my dearest friend, it is a sad and serious truth: I verily believe I should run mad if I knew you to be in such a state as excess of confinement and mental exertion will reduce any one to. I once thought like you that I had a frame of iron: I was mistaken there. No! Six hours are all that I can possibly grant you; four are all that I require; and I answer for the result.

Now you must take all this into your serious

consideration; lay down some scheme of distributing your time, not more liberal than you can conveniently adhere to; and above all, *persist in it inflexibly*. Tell me what arrangement you have entered into, that I may have before me a full picture of your usual life, that I may praise you if I find that you continue constant, or scold you for negligence as vehemently as you have often scolded me. I pity you with *Tacitus;* you should not toil too much over the cramp passages of it: mark them all and we will sit in judgement over them next time we meet. Do the same with *Wallenstein;* which by the way it is not in the least surprising that you cannot read, the first part of it being about as difficult as any German I ever saw. What remains, however, is much easier as well as more interesting. If you do not like the heroic Max Piccolomini and that angel Thekla, I shall never forgive you. Wallenstein himself is one of the most gigantic, calm, imposing characters to be found in Tragedy. *Rosamunda* I have not seen: but Buller is to begin Italian in Spring, when I must go over all those things in earnest. Have you any dictionary but Graglia's?

I am charmed to find you so zealous in the cause of the "heroine." I have been revolving the subject myself; and I am almost determined to begin! I do think sometimes that we two could write a very moderate novel: and then to come forth *together* — to mingle our ideas — to be as one in that matter! — the very thought is delightful. But Oh! the *vis inertiæ* that is in me! I am miserable till I commence something; yet commence I cannot. Was there ever such a fool! But it is needless to talk. It must be now or *never*. My business is

arranged at present so that I do not see the Bullers till two o'clock, and have done with them before tea; I am at liberty all the morning, in better health than I have been for two years; in short if I do not now at least try to effect something, I deserve to pine in cold obstruction all my days. Will you collect all your ideas on the matter — think seriously of it — not as a chimera but as a thing actually to be done; and then listen to what I shall propose next time I write. I shall either have abandoned the subject altogether, or have some definite plan to communicate for your inspection and co-operation. Perhaps I shall have actually begun. "Begin then!" you say: well, who knows but it were best to dash at once into the subject without further parley, and leave the rest to Providence? *Rusticus expectat dum defluat amnis* [The rustic waits till the river flow past],[1] &c — but it will never, never flow away.

Since I wrote last there was a man, whom I knew here, sent me advice to become a candidate for a Professorship of Mathematics in the Royal Military College at Sandhurst in Surrey, which he seemed to be of opinion I might easily secure. The emolument he says is £200 *per an.*, with a good house and garden; there are two vacations of seven weeks each in the year, and (*proh pudor!*) "liberal allowances for coals and candles." I do not think I have almost any chance to go. However I wrote again to make farther enquiries. — The fat Bookseller is laid upon the shelf, I think — at least for a time.

Thus, my dear friend, do I keep prating without stint about all my wiseacre devices, and most pro-

[1] Horace, "Ep.," i. 2, 42.

saic concerns. You are too kind, you listen to me so patiently. I have only farther to ask that you would write to me with as much minuteness and as little care. Next to the pleasure of seeing you daily is that of inspecting those delightful little pictures you can give so easily of your daily history. I am angry with that large woman, tho' I might have predicted as much: she must just be left to her fate "in her own humble way" since she will have it so; she will not I fear even get a Governess from you. I admire the dexterity with which you can adapt yourself to circumstances; it was exceedingly ingenious in you to become the "dashing thoughtless good-natured blockhead of a girl" you talk of: I can easily believe the character would take; no wonder it took. I also admire the Captain's notions of a "bluestocking." What a royal world this would be if it were full of S——s! No sentiments more pathetic than those of hunger and thirst — no wish but for Bank-notes and "accomplishments" — the *malady of thought* forever gone! After all it is pity that the lady is not as ambitious as she is fat. Some of these fat people are excellent creatures; naturally they are like cushions on which the restless souls of us lean careworn wights delight to take repose. I know a person about five feet in diameter, his face "round as the shield of my father's" and of the hue of copper, was never wrinkled with a frown; he loves not, hates not, thinks not, but like some great culinary sun he moves about diffusing images of snugness peace and warm substantial cheer on every side: he is now gone down into a Kirk, and I never think of his absence but with something like regret.

Is it not very wrong in you to disturb the repose

of Faust?[1] Was he not "quietly inurn'd" many months ago, beneath a load of rubbish huge as the ruins of Nineveh, and of the same material — solid clay? Yet I have sent him; for it is written Women will have their way. I read it over with much astonishment yesterday. Much good may it do you!

On observing what liberties you had taken with my Pindarics, I strove as much as possible to get into a violent indignation against you — but could not succeed. I have nothing in the shape of verse to send you this time; but prose as you perceive in abundance. Here however I must end; even your patience has a limit. I will write more briefly in future. Goodnight my dear friend! I long to hear from you about all that concerns you; being ever,

Most affectionately yours,
THOMAS CARLYLE.

I have examined the paper on the "Fine Arts"; but as I know not anything of painting, and only saw Mr. W.'s picture for about three minutes, all that I can say is that the Letter appears to be smartly written: perhaps the author is a little too ambitious of making beautiful sentences; he seems to know more about *chiaro-scuro*, tints, body-colours, &c, than the art of composition.

I had a fragment of the "True-Briton" newspaper, containing a criticism on Edward Irving, who is making an immense figure in London — which I meant to send you; but Brother Jack in his zeal against waste-paper burnt it yesterday. I was in a

[1] Carlyle's critique on "Faust." — See *ante*, Letter 6, *n*.

passion with the poor fellow — or nearly so, and very undeservedly. He is one of the most honest souls in being. I envy him his zeal for Medicine and Science.

Letter 32

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

3, Moray Street, 'Early Dec., 1822.'

My dear Friend, — I hope this Tragedy of Byron's will amuse you for an hour or two: I meant to send it on Saturday, but was too late by some minutes in finishing it myself. You must not entirely "give up" his Lordship yet; he is a person of many high and splendid qualities, tho' as yet they have done little for him: I still hope he will improve. If I had his genius and health and liberty, I would make the next three centuries recollect me. Tell me what you think of this *Werner*.

I have spent a stupid day in reading the Abbé de Sade's Memoirs of Petrarch.[1] What a feeble whipster was this Petrarch with all his talents! To go dangling about, for the space of twenty years, puffing and sighing after a little coquette, whose charms lay chiefly in the fervour of his own imagination, and the art she had to keep him wavering between hope and despondency — at once ridiculous and deplorable — that he might write Sonnets in her praise! Did you ever read his *Rime?* I find it quite impossible to admire them sufficiently: to me they seem a very

[1] "Mémoires de Petrarque," published, 1764. The "little coquette," who inspired many of Petrarch's Sonnets, is believed to have been Laura de Noves, who afterwards married Hugo de Sade, and died in 1348.

worthless employment for a mind like Petrarch's — he might have built a palace, and he has made some dozen snuff-boxes with invisible hinges, — very pretty certainly — but very small and altogether useless. But the Italians call them *divine*, and that is everything.

If you reckon this criticism impertinent and out of place, impute it to a complication of headaches, &c, &c, enough to make a man turn Manichean or worshipper of Satan altogether, — much more grow tired of Sonnets and little Abbés who write books in three volumes quarto.

I must ask about your Rollin however: for I am in great anxieties about it. Do you still persist? What volume are you in? I feel for you, and often ask myself if I am not a barbarian to set a soft *gentile spírito* like yours on such an undertaking. Yet what can I do? You are miserable without the hopes of literary honour before you; and there is no royal road to attain it. Labour, perseverance, moderate but constant industry, these are the means; and the end — is it not enough to excite ambition which no toil, no disappointment can extinguish? Proceed then, my dear and noble heroine! If you feel strength within you to make the sacrifices, to meet the risks, which this career demands from all — proceed in it, and never waver! Avoid excess on both sides; it is this which ruins you: be steadfast, neither exhausting your ardour by over-labour nor wasting it in idleness, and be sure the day *will* come when you shall have your reward. I perceive that if you go on steadily with this plan, I shall be forced to esteem you more than I ever did; — a superfluous result, you will say.

I have much to say about Writings and Tales and

so forth; but not to-night. One thing is certain: — like another friend of yours, "I have no genius," not a whit: yet I have planted myself at my desk, and almost sworn that there I will sit during my three free hours, every morning, with no book before me, nor other instrument but pen and paper, that whether bright or stupid, sick or sicker, I may write *something*, or undergo the pain of total idleness, whichever I prefer! This is surely what you call the *Post sublime*, or something better. Next time I will tell you all concerning it. When will you write to me? And when — when am I to see you? Never? Well, God bless you, my dear friend! Whether seeing you or not seeing you,

I am always yours,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

LETTER 33

Miss Welsh to T. Carlyle, Edinburgh

HADDINGTON, Friday, '6th Dec., 1822.'

MY DEAR FRIEND, — Write to me whenever you have headache: it makes you the most amusing of human beings. Poor Petrarca! as long as I live I shall not see a snuff-box without thinking of him! I am glad you do not like his "puffing and sighing": I never could *endure* it. —

Many thanks for *Werner*, of which I might never have heard in this barbarous borough. Is it not a masterly performance? He is my own matchless Byron after all! —

You wish to be acquainted with the arrangements of my time: well then, attend. I rise at nine (a

promising beginning!), till ten I dress, breakfast, and play with Shandy or my reticule; from ten till two I read Rollin, — I cannot say with all my heart; but with all my understanding, referring as often as occasion is, to my ancient maps and Classical Dictionary. I have felt the want of this dictionary,[1] or something of the sort, for a great while; but before you mentioned it, I did not know of its existence. From two till four (our dinner hour) I walk if the day is fine; if not I spend these two hours in drawing, music, talking, chess, or any other lady-like accomplishment. After dinner I have two hours for light reading, or *light writing*, and four (don't be angry) for Schiller, Tacitus and Alfieri. This routine is liable to interruptions; and while one lives in society, these interruptions cannot be avoided; but I content myself with repairing the evil I cannot prevent: I have always a stock of spare time consisting of four hours, and on this I draw when I am hard pressed with callers, tea-bibbers, and such like hereditary encumbrances. Before my hours were thus disposed, I generally spent one-half of the day in dressing and visiting, and the other half in deploring my idleness. By cutting my hair in a new fashion, and *sewing my waists to my skirts* (you bid me be minute) I have so expedited the process of dressing that it costs me on no occasion above ten minutes. As to visiting, without declaring my intention of refusing *all* invitations, I refuse *each* on the plea of cold, the weather, Letters to write (God knows *you* are my only correspondent), or on any other plea that my wits at the moment suggest. Thus I avoid both the misery of sitting for hours stuck up among imbeciles, and the odium which a

[1] Lemprière's, which Carlyle had recommended.

professed distaste for their amusements would procure me. — During this last month I have gone thro' a large portion of *Tacitus*, *Rosamunda*, the second part of *Wallenstein* (the first I left in despair), and five volumes of the *Ancient History*. — What glorious beings these Greeks are! I think, instead of eternally harping on the blindness of the heathen, M. Rollin had more occasion to deplore the degeneracy of our race; since he and his Christian brethren with all the advantages of their boasted religion, come so far short of the heathen in talent, heroism, and every noble quality that likens men to gods. Does he moralize through the whole thirteen volumes? I *will* persist, come what may! — Did you never think of writing a Tragedy on the death of Socrates? While I was reading his life, I was seized with a sudden desire to become a philosopher. That noble contempt of the pomp and luxury of wealth particularly struck me; and when I came to that exclamation of his, "*quantis non egeo*" [how many things are there which I need not], I began to think seriously of laying aside all my superfluities, as a first grand step towards the accomplishment of my design. With my head full of this sage resolution, I went to walk; and while I was talking to a lady, I missed a bunch of amethysts, — the most valuable jewels in my possession: my first thought was, "*quanto egeo*"; my next, "let me begin to be a philosopher." Accordingly I finished my story (a long story it was!) without pausing, or changing countenance. On my way home, I reflected that all the gold and jewels in the world, could not be converted to *one* grain of wisdom; and wisdom being the only real good, it followed that the amethyst broach was utterly worthless; therefore it was un-

worthy a rational being, and most unworthy a philosopher, to regret its loss. So far Socrates himself could not have thought or acted more philosophically. Now, in what do you think these wise reflections ended? In sending the Bellman through every quarter of the Town to proclaim my loss, and promise a great reward to whoever should give intelligence thereof. However I am not persecuted with good fortune like the king (I forget his name) who found the ring he cast away, in a fish's belly. My beautiful amethysts have never been heard of more.

I am reading *Merope*[1] and the third part of *Wallenstein*. Max Piccolomini is, to my taste, a finer person than either Mortimer or Carlos. I think I will read *Faust* when I have finished *Wallenstein*, if you think me fit for it. I am very desirous to be acquainted with what *you* so much admire. I expect to like it better than anything I ever read (not even the review of it excepted).

You bid me collect my ideas on the subject of the heroine, and then listen to what you have to propose. Now I think it is better to hear you first, and collect my ideas afterwards. Proceed then! Have I not already told you I am willing to *attempt anything?* What more of the Professorship? I have a thousand things more to say and ask; but it is impossible for me to write another word at present. I wish you may be able to read and understand what I have written: my pen is diabolical; and no fewer than three blockheads have been talking in the room ever since I commenced. But I was resolved to write today, being ashamed to delay your books any longer. — Is your Brother

[1] One of Alfieri's many Tragedies.

like you? Give him my compliments. Write to me soon, and never apologize for the length of your Letters. Oh! I had a great deal more to say; and I should like to have said what I have said better.

Yours affectionately,

JANE WELSH.

Will you be kind enough to put the Note for my Uncle into the post-office, when you have occasion to walk that way.

LETTER 34

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

3, MORAY STREET, 16th December, 1822.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I am doubly vexed at the large mass of soiled paper which you receive along with this; — both because of its natural qualities, and because it has detained me a whole week from writing to you. I have need of motives for exertion; and I wish to keep this prospect before me throughout my stupid task. It is at last accomplished, and I am now to reap my reward.

My dear Friend, if you do not grow more cross with me soon, I shall become an entire fool. When I get one of these charming kind Letters it puts me into such a humour as you cannot conceive: I read it over till I can almost say it by heart; then sit brooding in a delicious idleness, or go wandering about in solitary places, dreaming over things — which never can be more than dreams. May Heaven reward you for the beautiful little jewel you have sent me! How demurely it was lying in its place, when I opened the Letter, — bright,

and pure and sparkling as its Mistress! I design to keep it as long as I live; to look on it after many years, when we perhaps are far asunder, — that I may enjoy the delights of memory when those of hope are passed away. You are indeed very kind to me: would it were in my power to repay you as I ought!

I thank you for the clear outline you have traced to me of your daily life: it gratifies me by the persuasion of your diligence, and enables me to conceive your employment at any hour I like. Even now I can see you — the time of "playing with Shandy or your reticule" being past — bending over your Rollin with lexicons and maps and all your apparatus lying round — toiling, striving, subduing the repugnances within, resisting the allurements to dissipation from without — vehemently steadfastly intent on scaling the rocky steep "where Fame's proud temple shines afar."[1] It is well done, my dear and honoured Jane! Go on in this noble undertaking; it is worthy of your efforts: persevere in it, and your success is certain.

I always knew you to be a deceitful person, full of devices and inexplicable turns: but who could have thought you would show so much contrivance in the plain process of getting on with your studies? To "sew skirts and waists together," to discard and combine, so that you accomplish in ten minutes what to an ordinary *belle* is the great business of her day! And then how convenient to have Letters to write (bless you for being so good a correspondent to me, *in truth!*) — to take cold so exactly in the nick of

[1] "Ah! who can tell how hard it is to climb
The steep where Fame's proud temple shines afar?"
James Beattie, "The Minstrel," Bk. i. St. 1.

time! I believe I ought to send you out Andrew Thomson's Sermon on the gross sinfulness of bidding your servant say *not at home*, or give you a lecture on that solemn point myself; but so it is, you have such a way of setting things forth, that do what you will, I cannot get angry at you — I must just submit. Still, however, I must seriously protest against the over-labour which you describe: it is greatly more than you are fit for; and I heartily pray that some interruption may occur every second evening, to drive you away from books and papers, to make you talk and laugh and enjoy yourself, tho' it were but with the "*imbeciles*" who drink tea and play whist in such a place as Haddington. You ought to thank your stars that you are so circumstanced: if left to yourself with that fervent temper and that delicate frame, you would be ruined by excessive exertion in twelve months. This to an absolute certainty. For the rest, I rejoice that you are proceeding so rapidly with M. Rollin, and gathering so many ideas even from that slender source. I love you for admiring Socrates, and determining to be a philosopher like him; tho' I do wish that your nascent purposes may sustain no more shocks so rude as the one you mention. Have you found the amethyst? I question if there are a dozen philosophers in this country that could bear such a trial much better than you bore it. After all, it is a fine thing to be a *lover of wisdom:* yet there was also a good deal of justness in your version of the *quantis non egeo*, which I once got from you as we walked along Princes Street, and which has often brought a smile across me since. "How many things are here which I do not want," said I, affecting to be a philosopher; "how many things are here which I

cannot get," said Jane, speaking the honest language of nature, and slily unmasking my philosophy. The truth is, everything has two faces: both these sentiments are correct in their proper season, both erroneous out of it.

It is certainly a pity that M. Rollin should be so very weak a man: he moralizes to the end of the chapter, and all his morality is not worth a doit. Yet you will [get] many useful thoughts from him, many splendid pictures of men and things, — of a mode of life which was not only highly interesting in itself, but also which has formed the basis of many principles that still give a deep colour to the speculations and literature of all civilized nations, and which is therefore worthy of your study in a double point of view. You must continue in him to the conclusion; you will get better guides through other portions of your pilgrimage. In the meantime, as I am anxious to reward the industry you have already shown, I propose that by way of vacation you shall suspend the perusal of M. Rollin, whenever you are thro' the seventh volume, which most likely you now are — for the period of three days, till you examine this Novel which I have sent you. Three days will do the whole business, and you will go on with greater spirit afterwards. You see I am not absolutely without mercy in my nature; I would not kill you all at once. In this "Anastasius" [1] I hope you will find something to amuse you, perhaps to instruct; it will at least give you the picture of a robust and vigorous mind, that has seen much, and that wants not some touches of poetry to describe it eloquently, or some powers of intellect to reflect well upon it. I en-

[1] By Thomas Hope, published, 1819.

joyed "Anastasius" the "Oriental Gil Blas" very much. Let no man despair that has read this book! In the year 1810 Mr. Thomas Hope brought forth a large publication upon fire-screens and fenders and tapestry and tea-urns and other upholstery matters which seemed to be the very acme of dulness and affectation: ten years afterwards he names himself the author of a book which few living writers would be ashamed to own. Let us persist, my Friend, without weariness or wavering! Perseverance will conquer *every* obstacle. — It is right in you to employ some portion of your time in light reading: this too you may turn to advantage as well as pleasure. Have you read all Pope's Works? Swift's? Dryden's and the other Classics of that age? Tell me, and I shall know better what to send you out. There is no way of acquiring a proper mastery of the resources contained in our English language, without studying these and the older writers in it. Many of them also are exceedingly amusing and instructive. What are you doing with *Wallenstein?* I will send you *Faust* whenever you have finished: I fear you will not like it so well as you expect — or will think I have misled you: but you shall try. I admire your inflexibility in the reading of *Tacitus;* it is a hard effort, one which few in your circumstances would be capable of making. Do not toil too much over it.

But I must not trifle away your paper and time in this manner: I promised to send you some intelligence about our *opus magnum*, an enterprise which, too like the *great work* of the Alchemist, appears to be attended with unspeakable preparation and discussion, and with no result at all. I must now tell you what I can say on the subject. You

will be very angry at me; but nevertheless I must go thro' with my detail. One virtue at least I may lay some claim to, the virtue of candour; since to you, whose good opinion it is about my very highest ambition to acquire, I am brave enough to disclose myself as the most feeble and vacillating mortal in existence. Perhaps you will impute this practice less to the absence of hypocrisy than to the presence of a strong wish to talk; perhaps with reason. *On veut mieux dire du mal de soi-même que de n'en point parler* [One would rather say ill of oneself than not speak at all]. So says La Rochefoucauld. Be as merciful to me as you can; and you shall hear.

After writing the last long Letter to you, I seriously inclined myself to the concoction of some project in the execution of which we two should go hand in hand. I formed a kind of plan, and actually commenced the filling of it up. We were to write a most eminent novel in concert: it was to proceed by way of Letters; I to take the gentleman, you the lady. The poor fellow was to be a very excellent character of course; a man in the middle-ranks of life gifted with good talents and a fervid enthusiastic turn of mind, learned in all sciences, practised in many virtues, — but tired out, at the time I took him up, with the impediments of a world by much too prosaic for him, entirely sick of struggling along the sordid bustle of existence, where he could glean so little enjoyment but found so much acute suffering. He had in fact met with no object worthy of all his admiration, the bloom of novelty was worn off, and no more substantial charm of solid usefulness had called on him to mingle in the business of life: he was very wretched and very ill-natured; had determined at last to bid adieu to

the hollow and contemptible progeny of Adam as far as possible — to immure himself in rustic solitude with a family of simple unaffected but polished and religious people who (by some means) were bound in gratitude to cherish him affectionately, and who like him had bid farewell to the world. Here the *hypochondriac* was to wander about for a time over the hill-country, to muse and meditate upon the aspects of Nature and his own soul, to meet with persons and incidents which should call upon him to deliver his views upon many points of science, literature and morals. At length he must grow tired of science, and Nature and simplicity just as he had of towns, sickening by degrees till his heart was full of bitterness and ennui, he speaks forth his sufferings — not in the puling Lake-style — but with a tongue of fire — sharp, sarcastic, apparently unfeeling, yet all the while betokening to the quick-sighted a man of lofty thoughts and generous affections smarting under the torment of its own overnobleness, and ready to break in pieces by the force of its own energies. Already all seems over with him, he has hinted about suicide and rejected it scornfully — but it is evident he cannot long exist in this to him most blasted, waste and lonely world, — when *you* — that is the heroine — come stepping in before him, with your *espièglerie*s [tricksy ways] and fervency, your "becks and wreathèd smiles,"[1] and all your native loveliness. Why should I talk? The man immediately turns crazy about you. The sole being he had ever truly loved, the sole being he can ever love; the epitome to him of all celestial things, the shining jewel in which he sees reflected all the pleasures of the uni-

[1] "Nods and becks and wreathèd smiles." — "L'Allegro," l. 28.

verse, the sun that has risen to illuminate his world when it seemed to be overshadowed in darkness forever! The earth again grows green beneath his feet, his soul recovers all its fiery energies, he is prepared to affront death and danger, to wrestle with devils and men that he may gain your favour. For a while you laugh at him and torment him, but at length take pity on the poor fellow; and grow as serious as he is. Then, oh then! what a more than elysian prospect![1] But alas! Fate &c, obstacles, &c, &c. — You are both broken-hearted and die; and the whole closes with a mortcloth, and Mr. Trotter and a company of undertakers.

I had fairly begun this thing, written two first Letters; and got the man set down in a very delightful part of the country. But I could not get along: I found that we should require to see one another and consult together every day; I grew affrighted and chilled at the aspect of the Public; I wrote with no *verve:* I threw it all into the fire. Yet I am almost persuaded that we might accomplish such a thing; nay I often vow that we *will* accomplish it yet, before all is done: but first we must have better auspices, we must be more near each other, we must learn to write more flowingly. What then was to be tried? I thought of a series of short tales, essays, sketches, miscellanies. You are to record your thoughts and observations and

[1] This project of writing an "eminent novel in concert" with Miss Welsh, was in part realised in the fragmentary "didactic novel," "Wotton Reinfred," begun shortly after their marriage, when they "could see one another and consult together every day." The Second Book of "Sartor Resartus" deals with the same subject. It is clear that Carlyle's intention from the first was to make himself the "hero" and Jane Welsh the "heroine" of both works. — See *infra*, Appendix B.

experiences in this way, I mine. Begin therefore; and let me have a little story with descriptions of manners and scenery and passion and character in the Highlands or Lowlands, or wherever you like best and feel yourself most at home. Do not say you cannot: write as you are used to write in those delightful cunning little lively epistles you send me, and the thing we want is found. I too will write in my own poor vein, neither fast nor well, but steadfastly and stubbornly: in time we shall both improve: and when we have enough accumulated for a volume, then we shall sift the wheat from the chaff, arrange it in concert sitting side by side, and give it to the world fearlessly, secure of *two* suffrages at least, and prepared to let the others come or stay as they like best. Now will you do this? Think of it well, then give your approval; you shall be my task-mistress, and I promise to obey you as a most faithful vassal. Consider it; and tell me next time that you have *begun* to work.

The stupid farrago which you receive along with this, is the *first of the series!* Do not absolutely condemn me for that lumbering piebald composition. A man must write a cart-load of trash, before he can produce a handful of excellence. This story might have been mended in the names and many of the incidents but it was not worth the labour: I gave it as I heard it. It is a *sooterkin* [monstrosity] and must remain so. I scarcely expect you will read it through.[1]

Now, my dear Friend, my time is done and I

[1] The story referred to here is "Cruthers and Jonson, or the Outskirts of Life, a True Story," first published (anonymously) in "Fraser's Magazine," January, 1831. Not the least interesting portion of the story is Carlyle's graphic delineation of the heroine,

must leave you. I could sit and talk with you here forever; but the world has other humbler tasks in it. I had many things more to tell you, had not my irregular confused mode of writing exhausted all my room. There is not a word more of Sandhurst: I understand the man is to be here at Christmas, and tell me all verbatim. You would not have me go? — Jack is delighted with your compliments — delighted that you should know such a being as

the "young and only daughter" of Jonson's patron and future father-in-law, which bears an unmistakable likeness to Miss Welsh. "Bright, airy sylph! Kind, generous soul! I could have loved her myself if I had seen her. Think of a slender delicate creature — formed in the very mould of beauty — elegant and airy in her movements as a fawn; black hair and eyes — jet black; her face meanwhile as pure and fair as lilies — and then for its expression — how shall I describe it? Nothing so changeful, nothing so lovely in all its changes: one moment it was sprightly gaiety, quick arch humour, sharp wrath, the most contemptuous indifference — then all at once there would spread over it a celestial gleam of warm affection, deep enthusiasm, — every feature beamed with tenderness and love, her eyes and looks would have melted a heart of stone; but ere you had time to fall down and worship them — poh! she was off into some other hemisphere — laughing at you — teasing you — again seeming to flit round the whole universe of human feeling, and to sport with every part of it. Oh! never was there such another beautiful, cruel, affectionate, wicked, adorable, capricious little gypsy sent into this world for the delight and vexation of mortal man. My own admiration is, how in the name of wonder Jonson ever got her wooed! — I should have thought it the most hopeless task in nature. Perhaps he had a singular skill in such undertakings: at any rate he throve. The cynosure of neighbouring eyes, the apple of discord to all bachelors within many leagues — richer many of them and more showy men than Jonson — preferred Jonson to them all. Perhaps, like Desdemona, she loved him for the dangers he had passed: at all events, she loved him — loved him with her whole soul, the little cozener — though it was many a weary day before he could determine whether she cared one straw for him or not."

he exists in the world. He bids me return his kind and humble services, and hopes to know more of you before the end. He is a good soul, and affords me some enjoyment here — a well-formed mind too, but *rudis indigesta* — much more placid and contented and well-conditioned than the unfortunate person you have made a friend of.

Now *do* not be long in writing to me. If you knew how much your Letters charm me you would not grudge your labour. Write to me without reserve — about *all* that you care for — not minding what you say or how you say it. Related as we are, dulness itself is often best of all, for it shows that we are friends and put confidence in one another. What an impudent knave I am to ask this of you, to affect to be on such terms with you! It is your own kind way of treating me that causes it. I have often upbraided fortune: but here I ought to call her the best of patronesses. How many men, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unbind, have travelled through the world and found no noble soul to care for them! While I — God bless you my dear Jane! — if I could deserve to be so treated by you I should be happy. Now you *must* not grow angry at me. Write, write! — I am "hungering and thirsting" to hear of you and all connected with you. — I am ever yours,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

LETTER 35

Miss Welsh to T. Carlyle, Edinburgh

HADDINGTON, 24th December, '1822.'

MY DEAR FRIEND, — You cannot fall on a more effectual [plan] of making my kindness for you

less, than talking so much about it. I see you do not understand how to manage us women: no wonder! — You ought above all things to beware of seeming grateful for any favour we may please to confer on you; for, you must know we value our favours just in proportion to the gratitude they are paid with. By thanking a lady however humbly, for any mark of her esteem, you at once alarm her pride, her prudence too, — if she happen to have any; whereas by receiving it with indifference you pique her vanity: and what miracles may not that work in your favour? — Would you continue to enjoy the sunshine of my smiles, you must also abstain from flattery (at least of the *common sort*). I have been stuffed with adulation ever since I left the Boarding-school (At that time I was as ugly a little bundle of a thing as ever you set your eyes on); and adulation like sweetmeats palls the appetite when presented at all hours of the day. I value one compliment to my judgement above twenty to my person (for the latter, my glass declares to me every morning, is totally unmerited, whereas I may be tempted to believe the former has some foundation); now what more delicate compliment can you pay to any one's judgement than to show you esteem it inaccessible to flattery? Here is a lesson for you! See that you profit by it! —

Oh, this book! This book! I dream on it all day and wake on it all night. You and it together will assuredly drive me mad (One of my great-grandaunts — she had been taught Latin too — died in a strait-waistcoat). Write Tales, indeed, to be placed side by side with yours! As foils, I suppose! You must either think me monstrous silly or generous beyond example: for you cannot

but know that were I to rack my heart and soul, I should never be able to extort anything worthy of being mentioned in the same century with the Story you have sent me. Unmerciful that you are, thus to throw me back on my own weakness after deluding me with the hope of getting *my* stupidities enlightened by *your* wit and *genius*. I cannot even *commence*. So many "sunny mornings in the month of May," and "stormy nights in the month of December," have shone and snowed at the commencement of works by ladies young and very young, that without committing plagiarism, I cannot avail myself, for a first line, of any one day of either Summer or Winter. Spring and Autumn have also been already appropriated. To be sure, there is a still more convenient way of beginning, — I mean plumping into the middle of the business at once, as in "No Fictions," for instance, which I think begins with, "'This is a fine day,' said Mr. A. to Mr. B. as they met." I really do not remember where, but somewhere they certainly did meet, and Mr. A. remarked "the day was fine," and Mr. B. replied, "it really was very fine indeed"!! But then my love of order prevents me from imitating this lively and humorous manner of setting out; for I have an insurmountable dislike to all stories that begin just where one naturally expects their end. I should be content to open the business with a moral reflection, but (always a "but") I never reflected in my life, and it would be the height of presumption to begin on paper. For mercy's sake help me *in;* if you do not, you shall hear some morning that I have hanged myself in my garters for an ambitious ass.

I return your *Wallenstein* with many thanks. It

is the most tragical Tragedy I ever read; and has cost me as many tears as might have wet my whole stock of new handkerchiefs. This German is a glorious language: while I live I shall bless my old music master whose starvation first suggested to me the idea of learning it. — I am in a desperate hurry tonight as you may see. I would have delayed writing till I found time to compose a Letter *worthy* of being got *by heart*, had I not been in want of more German. If you have *Faust*, I will thank you for it. If you have it not, I desire you will not get it; but send me anything you have in the meantime, and I can get it and some other books I want when I am in town at the beginning of Spring. [*No signature.*]

> "Ein ruheloser Marsch war unser Leben,
> Und wie des Windes Sausen, heimatlos,
> Durchstürmten wir die kriegbewegte Erde." [1]

Was there ever anything so beautiful?

Letter 36

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

3, Moray Street, 25th December, 1822.

My dear Friend, — I got your parcel about two hours ago. I have been living for the last week in the dread of a *lecture;* I now think it happy that I am quit so easily. It is very true I am a kind of *ineptus ;* and when I sit down to write

[1] "Wallenstein," Act iii. sc. 15. In his "Life of Schiller" Carlyle translates the passage thus:

> "Our life was but a battle and a march,
> And, like the wind's blast, never-resting, homeless,
> We stormed across the war-convulsed Earth."

Letters to people that I care anything for, I am too apt to get into a certain ebullient humour, and so to indite great quantities of nonsense, which even my own judgement condemns — when too late for being mended. The longer I live, the more clearly do I see that Corporal Nym's maxim is the great elixir of Philosophy, the quintessence of all moral doctrine. *Pauca verba, pauca verba* is the only remedy we can apply to all the excesses and irregularities of the head and heart. *Pauca verba*, then!

You are too late by a day in asking for *Faust*. It is not to be got in the bookshops here, and the College-library is shut for the Christmas holidays. You shall have the volume on the 2d or 3d of January. In the meantime, I have sent you *Tell* and the *Bride of Messina*, the former of which Schiller's critics have praised greatly; generally condemning the latter as written upon a false system, tho' with immense care and labour. I was disappointed in *Tell:* it struck me as too disjointed and heterogeneous, tho' there are excellent views of Swiss life in it, and Tell himself is a fine patriot-peasant. I want your criticism on it. You did well to cry so heartily over *Wallenstein:* I like it best of any in the series. Is it not strange that they cannot for their hearts get up a decent play in our own country? All try it and all fail. Lord John Russell has sent us down what he calls a "tragedy" the other day — and upon a subject no less dangerous than the fate of Don Carlos. Schiller and Alfieri yet live. The newspapers say Lord Byron is greatly obliged to his brother lord, the latter having even surpassed "Werner" in tameness and insipidity; so that Byron is no longer Author of the dullest tragedy ever printed by a lord. This is very foul to Byron; for tho' I

fear he will never write a good play, it is impossible he can ever write anything so truly innocent as this *Don Carlos*. I would have sent it to you; but it seemed superfluous. There is great regularity in the speeches, the lines have all ten syllables exactly — and precisely the same smooth ding-dong rhythm from the first page to the last; there are also little bits of metaphors scattered up and down at convenient intervals, and very fair Whig sentiments here and there; but the whole is cold, flat, stale and unprofitable, to a degree that "neither gods nor men nor columns can endure." [1] You and I could write a better thing in two weeks, and then burn it. Yet he dedicates to Lord Holland, and seems to say like Correggio in the Vatican *ed io anche son pittore*. [2] Let us be of courage! we shall not be hindmost any way.

I am really sorry to see you in such a coil about your writing. What use is there in so perplexing and over-tasking yourself with what should be the ornament and solace of your life, not its chief vexation? I take blame to myself in the business; and pray you to be moderate. One thing ought to afford you some consolation: "Genius" said Sir Joshua Reynolds, and he never spoke more truly, "is nothing but the intense direction of a mind to

[1] ". . . mediocribus esse poetis
Non homines, non Di, non concessere columnæ."
HORACE, "Ars Poet.," ll. 372–3.

(Neither gods nor men nor the bookstalls grant poets the privilege of being mediocre.) — The "columnæ" were the pillars at booksellers' doors, on which were posted the lists of books for sale within.

[2] Correggio had come to Rome to see the Frescos of Raphael, in the Vatican; after gazing on these for a long time, he exclaimed, "*Anch'io son pittore!*" (I also am a painter!). Though at that time comparatively unappreciated by the public, Correggio was not unconscious of his own artistic genius.

some intellectual object — that consecration of all our powers to it, which leads to disregard all toils and obstacles in the attainment of it, and if strong enough will ultimately bring success." Some such thought as this was Sir Joshua's;[1] and truly it contains nine-tenths of the whole doctrine: it should lead every one that feels this inspiration and unrest within to be proud of feeling it, and also to adopt the only means of turning it to good account — the sedulous cultivation of the faculties by patiently amassing knowledge and studying by every method to digest it well. This, my dear Pupil, is the great deficiency with you at present; this I would have you to regard as your chief object for a considerable time to come. Be diligent with your historical and other studies; and consider that every new step you make in this direction *is* infallibly, however circuitously, leading you nearer to the goal at which you are aiming. For composition, the art of expressing the thoughts and emotions you are thus daily acquiring, do not by any means neglect it; but at the same time feel no surprise at the disproportion of your wishes to your execution in regard to it. How long did it take you to learn playing on the Piano? and what execrable jingling did you make when you first tried it? But what are all the stringed instruments of the Earth in point of complicacy compared to one immortal mind? Is it strange that you should feel a difficulty in managing the rich melodies that "slumber in the chords" of your Imagination, your Understanding and your Heart? Long years of patient industry, many trials, many failures must be gone through, before you can even begin to satisfy yourself. And do not let this dishearten you

[1] See Sir Joshua Reynolds' "Second Discourse."

— for if rightly gone about, the task is pleasant as well as necessary. I have promised that if you will but take hold of my hand, I — dim-sighted guide as I am — will lead you along pleasant paths up even to the summit. I am still confident in my predictions, still zealous to perform: my only stipulation is that we go on constantly and regularly; you shall neither stop to trifle by the way, nor run till you are out of breath — as you are now doing, and must soon cease to do in disgust and exhaustion — or else break your heart in vain striving.

I partly guess what hinders you from beginning your "story": it is the excess of that noble quality in you, which I have preached against so vigorously, and still love for all my preaching, — the excess of your *ambition*, the too high ideas you have formed of excellence, and your vexation at not realising them. It is safe to err on this side, so far as feeling is concerned; but wrong to let your action be so much cramped by these considerations. Cannot you do as others do? Sit down and write — something short — but write and write, tho' you could swear it was the most stupid stuff in nature, till you fairly get to the end. A week after it is finished it will look far better than you expected. The next you write will go on more smoothly and look better still. So likewise will the third and fourth — in regular progression — till you will wonder how such difficulties could ever stop you for a moment. Be not too careful for a subject; take the one you feel most interest in and understand best — some description of manners or passions — some picture of a kind of life you are familiar with, and which looks lovely in your eyes: and for a commencement, why should it give you pause? Take the precept of

Horace, *proripe in medias res* [dash into the midst of things];[1] rush forward and fear nothing. You really magnify the matter too much: never think of the Press or Public when you are writing: remember that it is only a *secondary matter* at present, to be taken up as a light task, and laid down again whenever it interferes with your regular studies. If you cannot think of any proper theme, cannot get in motion for whatever cause; then let the business rest for a week; cease to vex yourself about it, in time materials will come unsought. Finally, my dear Friend, possess your mind in patience, follow your laborious but noble task with peaceful diligence; study, read, accumulate ideas, and try to give them utterance in all ways; and look upon it as a cardinal truth that there is *no* obstacle before you which calm perseverance will not enable you to surmount.

Now I am sure, you cannot say I have tried to flatter you on this occasion. My speech has been at once dull and honest: I have preached till we are both grown stupid, you observe; and I leave you undeceived at any rate if uninstructed. The sum of my doctrine is: Begin to write something, if you can, without delay, never minding *how* shallow and poor it may seem; if you cannot, drive it altogether out of your thoughts, till we meet. I entertain no fear whatever of the result: I know well you *will* write better than you yet dream of, and look back on these sage prescriptions of mine with

1 "Semper ad eventum festinat, et in medias res,
Non secus ac notas, auditorem rapit, . . ."
"Ars Poet.," ll. 148–9.

Horace says approvingly that Homer always "hastens to the catastrophe," or final event, and hurries his hearer into the midst of things, as if the preliminaries were already well known.

an indulgent pity. Shall we not also write together when times are better? Yes we shall — in spite of your good-natured sarcasms at my "wit and genius," and the lubberly productions I send you at present — we *shall* write in concert — if Fortune does not mean to vex me more than she has ever done. — This Hope is a fine creature after all! I owe her more than the whole posse of Saints and Angels put together.

By the Belfast Town and Country Almanack, Spring will be here in a month. Perhaps you think to steal away again without seeing me: but try it — ! — To be sure, it is only the brief space of a year, since we met, for about five minutes; and we have so many hundred centuries to live on Earth together — I confess I am very unreasonable.

But why should I keep prating? The night is run, my pen is worn to the stump and certain male and female Milliners in the street are regaling themselves with *Auld Langsyne*, and punch and other viler liquors, and calling back my thoughts too fast from those elysian flights to the vulgar prose of this poor world. May Heaven be the comforter of these poor Milliners! Their noise and jollity might call forth anathemas from a cynic: my prayer for them is that they may never want a sausage or two and a goose better or worse and a drop of "blue ruin" to keep their Christmas with; and whatever quantities of tape and beeswax and diluted tea their several necessities require.

I will write again with *Faust* — briefly, I promise — and tell you all that I am doing and mean to do. Good night! my dear Friend, I am always,

Yours in sincerity,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

Letter 37.

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

3, Moray Street, 3rd January, 1823.

My dear Friend, — The year commences with me inauspiciously, I am in ill luck at present. I could not get *Faust* for you yesterday, I have little hope of getting it today — unless the Librarian lied; and now that I enjoy the privilege of writing to you, my time is so short and my head so confused that I must part without saying above three words. The sweet people hereabouts, with their junkettings and jiggings, their fiddling capering carousing — all for joy that they are got a step nearer the conclusion of their pitiful existence — have put me into the most wonderful quandary. . . . Quietness and fresh air — quietness deep as of the grave, and breezes free as they blow over the summit of Cairngorm — these with food and raiment, are the humble blessings for which I have fatigued the ear of Heaven so long and to so little purpose. Perhaps the answer is coming after all. Who knows but in some green sheltered nook of the Earth a peaceful home may yet arise for me! A fair yet honest mansion it shall be; with books, and things convenient, and those I love, within; with woods and waters and lofty mountains round it, and the blue canopy above; and no vulgar biped to approach within a furlong of it under pain of death. How you turn up your nose at all this!

Well! how fares it with Monsieur Rollin? I am in great pain for him during the late revelries. Remember that you are under a vow to go on with him to the end, how dull soever he may grow.

Against this time twelvemonth, if you continue studying, I promise that your stock of solid information will be increased beyond your hopes. Persist then, my dear Jane; and let nothing daunt you! If I once saw you the woman that Nature intended you to be, I should feel a pleasure which nothing else could give me. What pride that *I* had contributed to make you! I pray with more earnestness than ever that you do not baulk me. It would be the worst of all the jade's-tricks Fortune has ever played me.

And have you fairly begun the Story? "No Sir! not a jot of it; and I beg you will hold your impertinent tongue on that subject." Well, never mind; do not fret yourself about it; things will mend in time. Read, think, gather knowledge and ideas from every source: you will find the task of composition grow easier every day. And is it not a noble art? Our natural horizon is a circle of some few miles, our earthly date a few brief years; and yet by *this*, our thoughts go from us to the utmost bounds of space and time; hearts that beat in the remotest borders of the world are fired by the sentiments that ours have conceived, they love us tho' unseen, and "being dead we yet speak." I had rather be a great philosopher or poet, if I were ambitious, than be the Emperor of all that lies between the Poles. Courage, then! *Espérance! Espérance!*

Do you know I am longing vehemently for February: I want to talk with you for about half a century then. When will you write to me? Let your Letter be as long and careless as you possibly can. I have been all but completely idle for the last ten days. God help me! and mend me! I de-

serve your contempt. Yet I am impudent enough: I had almost begun a — what do you think? — a tragedy last week! The subject was — But it is going I feel, and we need not speak of it. Write me the first moment you have.

I am ever yours,
THOMAS CARLYLE.

LETTER 38

Miss Welsh to T. Carlyle, Edinburgh

HADDINGTON, 8th January, '1823.'

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I have not been in such ill-humour for a great while. I could cry all day long, if crying would mend the matter; but I fear it would only spoil my beautiful eyes. No musical Milliners are the cause of my discontent. We have "fiddling, capering and carousing" here also, and fratricide among geese, and all the rest of it; but while the whole town and country around me are jigging and quadrilling away their senses as if they had heard a blast from Oberon's horn, I (thanks to David Roughead, the provident builder of this house)[1] am nowise annoyed by the sight or sound of their folly. The enemy is within doors: my Uncle Robert and his cold, prosaic, beautiful, artificial, Glasgow Wife have been here a whole week; and God knows when we shall get rid of them! The one shoots and sleeps, the other yawns and dresses, all day long. They would *ennuyer* Job himself, were he living at this day. But what is worst to bear, I am compelled by eti-

[1] The house was rebuilt by Robert Reid, Mason in Haddington, for David Roughead, who sold it to Dr. Welsh. I have failed to find the exact dates.

quette — eternal etiquette — to take leave of Schiller, Alfieri and all my dear companions, to listen in agonies of patience to their insipidities.[1] To read, in my own house, before visitors, would be a breach of politeness never to be forgotten or forgiven. I declare if it were not that my Mother could not well do without me, I would decamp and turn Hermitess in some wild Highland Glen; for I find that as long as I live with society, I must be its slave.

I finished Rollin before these people came. I am quite distressed about my memory: after all the time and pains I have bestowed on this Ancient History, I find my mind retains but a faint outline of it. I did not read the dissertation on the Arts and Sciences; it seemed lumpish stuff and foreign to my present purpose. However, if you think it for my good to spend a fortnight on these three volumes, I will not grudge it.

I do not like *William Tell* so well as *Wallenstein:* the interest is so distracted; but perhaps it will improve. I *was* reading *Metastasio.*[2] What sentiments!

You did not mean me to return your Story?[3] I hope not. I shall soon be able to *say it by heart.* How I envy you! I would give Shandy and my Pearl-necklace to be able to write such another;— but that I shall never be!

[1] *Cf.* Letter X, "Early Letters of J. W. Carlyle," pp. 67–75.

[2] An Italian poet of humble origin (1698–1782). He began by singing his own verses on the streets; but in 1729 he became court poet to the Vienna Theatre and there wrote some of his best work, gaining a considerable reputation.

[3] "Cruthers and Jonson."

My Mother had a Letter from Mr. Irving, some time since, — the most grotesque performance, I dare swear, that was ever penned beyond the precincts of a lunatic asylum. It begins with, "It is past midnight." After stating that he is suddenly and irresistibly impelled to write, "by one of those strong movements coming from whence he knows not, but to him like the monitions of a higher spirit," he proceeds to an elaborate description of his *two* candles, one of which he has extinguished that he may have light to finish his Letter. While he is wasting light in narrating this *new* and ingenious contrivance for saving it, he reminds me of a certain sagacious schoolfellow of mine who, having lost one of his two Saturday halfpennies in a dark corner, bought a candle with the other to look for the one he had lost! From the candles he flies off to a pack of fiddlers under his window, "*breathing* the most melting and most melancholy music." The said fiddlers parade Gloucester Street till (if I may judge by the fatigue I endured in following them) they must have been ready to fall down. After playing "Erin go brah," "Auld Langsyne," "Lochaber No More," &c, &c, &c, they take their departure (I hoped forever); "but again it comes! a strain more sweet from distance, and endeared by the tender associations of friendship. It is — 'Caller Herring!'" — Here his soul is "*entirely overwhelmed*," and he winds up the article of the fiddlers by declaring, he "is laid prostrate on the sofa" (a most inconvenient writing posture, one would imagine!!), "given up to the silence of his own thoughts!" The candles, sofa and soul-subduing fiddlers are followed by God, a London Bookseller, his fair Pupil (that's me), the Vision of

Judgment, and the Caledonian Chapel, — all jostling each other in most disrespectful manner. Just when the confusion is at the thickest, his candle goes out and leaves him in the dark; which event he relates in characters formed with scrupulous nicety. Was there ever anything so absurd? "Is it not a shame, yea a black and a burning shame" to enslave his gigantic powers to such paltry worse than womanish affectations? — But I am using my paper very unprofitably.

Tell me as soon as you like what history I must read next. Do not plague yourself any more about *Faust:* I really do not want it till I have finished *Tell.* Have the goodness to mention where the best account of the time of Charles I. is to be found. A young lady asked me the question last night, and I promised to tell her next week.

Have you seen little Nichol? What a selfish narrow soul it is! What did he say to you about my looks? He got two very contradictory messages on the subject. — Do write long and soon. As soon as my Aunt is out of the way, I shall certainly *try* to profit by your advice respecting my writing. — A man has come to tune my piano; so I must bid you farewell. You must go on with those Tales, indeed you must. I have had no time to read the book you have sent me; — the subject seems dismal enough.[1] Compliments to your Brother.

Yours affectionately,
JANE WELSH.

[1] The "Calamities of Authors," by Isaac D'Israeli.

Letter 39

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington.

3, Moray Street, 12th January, 1823.

My dear Friend, — I must congratulate you on your safe passage thro' the Ancient History: you have really done very cleverly in this matter. If you continue the same sort of exertion for a little longer, I shall cease to have any doubts respecting your ultimate success. Are not the pleasures of successful diligence superior to all others? You will find this more emphatically true, the longer you make the experiment. In the meantime, do not let the alleged imperfection of your memory discourage you too much: it is a universal complaint, and the farther you advance you will feel it the less. No one of our faculties is so susceptible of improvement as this, or so completely dependent on ourselves in all its stages of improvement. Besides, the more facts you accumulate, the more relations will you find among them, and hence the more hints to suggest the leading ones, which thus become more easily remembered at every new step of your progress. You should try to fix in your mind the few great events which influenced all the rest; to obtain an indelible impression of their dates and circumstances, and thoroughly to understand them in all their bearings. They stand like beacons in the great sea of history, each commanding a large space all around it: the lesser occurrences naturally group themselves about them, and are held in memory by the simplest of all connections, that of cause and effect. On the whole, I rather think that your memory is a very good one; that you at present

retain a greater portion of Rollin's narrative than one out of a hundred ordinary readers would have done, at a first perusal, in a subject so new to them. Be content, therefore; you will get your recollections refreshed as you proceed. Did you go on taking notes, as you began? I imagine this to be a good practice if used in moderation. You should also keep looking at your maps and your Lemprière; remember the *two windows*, chronology and geography: just in proportion to the vividness and distinctness of your original conception of anything, will be the length of time you recollect it.

I meant to send you Ferguson's *Roman Republic;* but it is not to be had at present. If you cannot get it quite conveniently, take this *Vertot*[1] instead: he deserves a perusal on his own account, and Ferguson can be procured afterwards. There are also Roman Histories by Hook and Rollin; but they are both rather tedious and sometimes silly. Goldsmith's is not worth reading. Unless you are tired of the Greeks, I would also recommend Gillies[2] to you, or Mitford, dull and stiff but not without strength or good information; and the travels of Anacharsis[3] by the Abbé Barthélemi, which is a very lively work. When you are sufficiently grounded in the Classical ages, I promise you a rich and various feast in Gibbon — by far the most splendid and trenchant person you have yet become acquainted with. Then we are got down to Charles V, and Russell,[4] and Sismondi, and the great Italians. —

[1] "Histoire des révolutions de la république romaine."

[2] John Gillies, "History of Ancient Greece."

[3] "Voyage du jeune Anacharsis en Grèce," 4 vols., 1788.

[4] William Russell (1741–1793), author of a "History of Modern Europe," and many other works.

You see I cut you out abundance of work: for in truth I begin to count largely on your diligence; and I know you will thank me for pointing out the plenteous harvest of profit and delight, which is here opened before you. To reap it, nothing is required but steadfast tho' moderate exertion, and a self-denial to the poor dissipations of female life — in which, with views and thoughts such as yours, you would find nothing to satisfy you at any rate. Your destination is different, and you must obey it. Never fear the labour; you are equal to ten times as much if you husband your strength: go on, go on! the victory is certain.

I know not whether you are yet delivered from your fardels: at all events you will soon be so. Before Tuesday, your Uncle must sit down again to his Lawbooks, and the "cold, prosaic, beautiful artificial" lady be engaged in her domestic operations, far enough from you. The "agony of patience" will give place to the glow of active effort, and you will advance with more alacrity for this interruption. I do love you for wishing to become a Hermitess in some Highland glen. Yet you must not go without attendance and much preparation: and would you not let me be of the party? Oh what a paradise of a place we should make it! — full of peace and kindness and all sweet and noble thoughts — happy as the first Eden, tho' in the grimmest region that the eye of Heaven visits! Seriously, these trammels and vulgar toils and eating cares do often grieve one: but it is the common lot; and he is happy who can steal some moments from this Egyptian bondage and consecrate them to worthy and memorable deeds. This both of us may hope for, both of us do

hope for it, and I swear that neither shall be disappointed.

You say I must go on with these Tales. With all my heart, so you go with me. Begin therefore; and proceed at once with spirit and moderation, *festina lente*, and we shall do rarely. In a given number of months we shall have a volume of them; in time we shall come out together, and what a day when *our* Book is given to the world! Recollect now, it depends on yourself. In a week I shall have done with these foolish Encyclopædical farragos, and then I am for you. What are you to write about? Never mind how bad the first is: we shall amend them all in concert, make them very decent and fit to see company. You have only to obey the impulses of your own genius, to write fearlessly, as you do in your Letters, and all will prosper.

What a wicked creature you are to make me laugh so at poor Irving! Do I not know him for one of the best men breathing, and that he loves us both as if he were our brother? Yet it must be owned there is something quite unique in his style of thought and language. Conceive the chords of sensibility awakened by the sound of *Caller Herring!* It is little better than the pathos of a great fat greasy Butcher whimpering and blubbering over the calf he has just run his knife into. The truth is, our friend has a radically dull organ of taste; he does everything in a floundering awkward ostentatious way. I have advised him a thousand times to give up all attempts at superfineness and be a son of Anak honestly at once, in mind as in body: but he will not see it thus. Occasionally I confess, I have envied him this want of tact, or rather the contented dimness of perception from which it partly proceeds:

it contributes largely to the affectionateness and placidity of his general character; he loves everything, because he sees nothing in its severe reality; hence his enthusiastic devotion, his fervour on topics adapted to the general comprehension, his eloquence, and the favour he gives to all and so gets from all. I still hope he will improve considerably, but not that he will ever entirely get free of these absurdities. And what if he should not? He has merit to balance ten times as many, and make him still one of the worthiest persons we shall ever meet with. Let us like him the better, the more freely we laugh.

Little Nichol has not seen me, or given me any account of your looks good or bad. What right has Nichol to speak about your looks, to have any picture of them in his little mind at all? My hope is that he will have forgot the subject altogether before he meets me — an event not likely to occur for many days. I find no pleasure in these people; they are of the Earth, earthy; I would not have them hate me, but our paths lie differently, we have shaken hands and parted long ago. Above all I would not have them speak of you.

But when am I to judge for myself? When shall I see you with my own eyes face to face? — I daresay you are teased with these importunities of mine: but I do not seriously wish you to give any heed to them. I know if I am kept absent from you, it is for good reasons — some of which are not unimaginable to me; I leave the matter in your own disposal. If you see me at all, I often think, it is more than I deserve. If I were an absolute Monarch, indeed — But then I am not. You will be here in February?

Tell your friend, that by far the most complete

account of Charles I. is to be found in Clarendon, his Minister, and a deep participator in most of the events he describes. To correct his excessive loyalty the lady should also read Ludlow's *Memoirs*. Ludlow was a Republican, and his book is far more easily read than the other; tho' I fear she will tire in either. For more minute information, there are Whitelock's *Memoirs*, *Rushworth*, Peck's *Memoirs of Cromwell*, May's *History of the Parliament;* she may also look at *Cromwelliana*, a volume published some years ago, and consisting of extracts from the Newspapers of the time; it is amusing in some parts, — as are likewise the *Memoirs* of Mrs. Colonel Hutchison, a devout lady of the Parliament side, which were printed lately. Oliver Cromwell's *Life* of his great namesake is the stupidest quarto in existence; Thomas Cromwell's I have not seen. On the whole the lady should place her chief dependence on Clarendon; and first read the corresponding part of Hume.

But I have filled a page with answering this simple question. *Ut mos est.* [As is my wont.] I must away and leave you — before I begin with any more disquisitions. How do you like *Tell* and *D'Israeli?* The latter has many more volumes of anecdotes, &c, which I will send if you like. I have not seen *Peveril of the Peak*, or Moore's *Loves of the Angels*, or the second number of the *Liberal*, with Byron's *Heaven and Earth* (another *Loves of the Angels*) in it. I thought to get the *Liberals* for you yesterday, but could not. The Vice-society is prosecuting for Byron's articles, and men are shy of selling them. Mr. Bradfute I think is the publisher here. — You will see them when you come to Town. Now, will you write immediately almost? Your Letters are

among the chief things I delight in at present. Adieu, my own Friend! I am always,

Most affectionately yours,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

My respects to Shandy — and my envy to the Pearl-necklace. You shall retain both, and do a thousand times better than you wish. For that Dogbolt of a Tale, I pray that I may never see it more. Begin yourself just now, and you will leave it out of sight. In time I hope to do something worthier of you — if I did not, I should be very wretched. But I *will* and that settles it.

LETTER 40

Miss Welsh to T. Carlyle, Edinburgh

HADDINGTON, Saturday, '18th January, 1823.'

MY DEAR FRIEND, — They are away, thank God! They are away. Dargo[1] and all! and I am once more free to prosecute my will. But how long shall I be so? A person from the Highlands, calling himself my Cousin, is coming next week. That literary character, Captain S——, too, is threatening us with a visit, and he will keep his word; for in spite of his religious horror at "bluestockings," he likes me well, "in his own humble way." Then there is the visit to Edinburgh, which, it defies my ingenuity to avoid much longer. Miserable me! What waste of time and temper *in prospectu!* God grant me Christian resignation! *O rus, quando ego te aspiciam? quandoque licebit, nunc veterum libris,*

[1] Robert Welsh's dog.

nunc somno (I could dispense with the *inertibus horis*) *ducere sollicitæ jucunda oblivia vitæ?*"[1] It may not be! Never, never! My lot is cast with the *profanum vulgus*, and I have nothing for if but to suffer and submit.—

Of all the pretty women I ever saw this Aunt-in-law of mine is the least amiable: so vain, so cold, so selfish! I have no patience for her affectations and insipidities. "My soul is above her!" What d' ye think she calls my Friend[2] in Germany (whom by the way I have not forgotten nor mean to forget for a great while), the most witty, dashing, accomplished person I dare swear she ever set her eyes on? She calls him "a tall, heavy stupid-looking lad"!! Oh, the indiscriminating ass! But what could one expect from Port Glasgow? She may have skill in the physiognomy of muslins, but the "*luminoso caractere dell' alma in fronte impresso*" [the luminous characters of the soul impressed upon the brow] is beyond her understanding. Could you but have had a peep of us! There was my precious Uncle, that pattern of a wise man, sneering, snarling, and sometimes snoring, his lady yawning and kicking

[1] O rus, quando ego te aspiciam? quandoque licebit,
Nunc veterum libris, nunc somno et inertibus horis
Ducere sollicitæ jucunda oblivia vitæ?
HORACE, "Sat.," Bk. ii. 6, ll. 60–3.

(O country, when shall I behold thee? When will it be permitted me to quaff sweet oblivion of the cares of life, now with books of old, now in sleep and idle hours?)

The following is a poetical translation of the same lines:

'When shall I see my sweet retreat?
Oh! when with books of sages deep,
Sequestered ease and gentle sleep,
In sweet oblivion, blissful calm!
The busy cares of life becalm?"

[2] The "new friend" mentioned in Letter 25 and described in Letter 27, *ante*.

the fire-irons, and practising postures. My Mother wearying her heart to entertain them, all in vain. Dargo prancing capering and overthrowing with all the impudence to be expected in a Town dog on a visit to friends in the Country; Shandy watching the movements of his Town-bred Cousin, with his back bristled like a very cat's, and ever and anon testifying his dissatisfaction at his freedom, with an eloquence of indignation that my ears still tingle to think of; and our sorrowful self casting many a wistful look towards the little table where *William Tell* and all the rest lay neglected, and heartily wishing our cold visitors in hotter quarters than they might have found to their liking. Oh, it was a week of Purgatory! But thank God it is over![1]

I never thought I should have come to wish myself born in a land of pigs and peat moss, and brought up among people the prose of whose life (I have heard you say) is pork, and whisky the poetry; but so it is. I envy you being a native of Annandale! You could never guess why! You must know then: I have been persuading myself, that this splendid imagination of yours, which is to me a never-failing subject of admiration, owes a part of its lustre to the fostering it has found from infancy in the traditionary lore in which I have been told your Fatherland abounds. It is so consolatory to be able to attribute the fine qualities in others, we do not possess ourselves, to external circumstances! Who knows what my imagination might have been, had it grown up in a land of tales instead of a land of turnips? had it been fed in its earliest years on

[1] For the sake of economy Miss Welsh often makes a double use of parts of her Letters. Several passages in the above Letter and in Letter X of her "Early Letters" are identical.

Border Songs and Border Legends instead of starving on "Molly with the Golden Arm," and "The little wee Wifie that lived in a Shoe"? This is a preamble you will perceive to the old story, my incapacity for writing, — a subject which I fear will soon excite as little interest as "Warren's blacking."

If you have one spark of humanity within your breast, send me an outline of some Tale to work on; else I shall never get on; for no sooner has my brain got up something like a plot, than I perceive it to be the veriest imbecility, and cast it away for some other, that is in its turn discarded with no less contempt. I have no heart to set about building my house on a foundation of sand; but mark out some spot to me that will not give way beneath my labour every step that it advances, and then I shall go on *con amore*. You laugh at me for being in "such a turmoil about my writing": you may laugh but you cannot wonder. How can I enjoy a moment's peace, knowing myself engaged in a pursuit, which I have no longer the power to give up, yet doubtful — almost hopeless — of success? Were I sure that my idol, Fame, however distant, however difficult, is actually within my reach, then indeed I would not care how I loitered on the way. But I am *not* sure; on the contrary I begin to believe myself the greatest ass in God's creation. What a destiny I have chosen! How full of difficulties, disquietudes, and danger! And perhaps, to end in disappointment! But I *cannot* turn back *now*, and I *would* not if I *could*. I could find in my heart to be singularly pathetic at the present moment, but I have not time, and it is just as well. "*So ben tacer, ma non saprei dir poco*" [I know well how

to hold my tongue, but I should not know how to say a little].

I have finished *William Tell* and mean to commence *Turandot*[1] on Monday. I could read Schiller forever. Who but himself could have made such a Play as *Tell* on such a plan? *Metastasio* is improving. I finish *Themistocles* and the second Book of Annals[2] today also. What tempted you to send me that deplorable volume of *Calamities?* It was enough to throw any one in my case into the blue-devils for a twelve-month to come. I do not know if the poor people would have had so much of my sympathy, had I not hoped to become of their fraternity, but certain it is I could not help *tearing* (to use the favourite expression of my Aunt's) very bitterly over their misfortunes. Have the goodness to send me the second volume of *Vertot* on Monday, that I may not lose time; but do not write unless you have *time* — how horrible! unless you are at *leisure.* — I am quite distressed at the trouble you have with these books: we will make some other arrangement when I am in Town. In the meantime I can only thank you. — My hour is done. —

Yours affectionately,

Jane B. Welsh.

Letter 41

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

3, Moray Street, 20 January, 1823.

My dear Friend, — I hope to get *Vertot* for you this afternoon, and I will not let slip the

[1] Schiller's "Princess of China." [2] Of Tacitus.

opportunity of scribbling a few lines along with it. You are very much mistaken in supposing that I can "laugh" at anything which so evidently makes you unhappy as the present subject of your anxiety. If my power were equal to my willingness to aid you, the difficulty would be speedily removed; but alas! "therein the patient must minister to herself," and the prescription which is so easily given is the hardest in the world to follow.

I wish I had not sent you this great blubbering numbskull D'Israeli: his "Calamities" have sunk upon your spirits, and tinged the whole world of intellect with the hue of mourning and despair. The paths of learning seem, in your present mood of mind, to lead but thro' regions of woe and lamentation and darkness and dead men's bones. Hang the ass! — it is all false, if you take it up in this light. Do you not see that his observations can apply only to men in whom genius was more the want of common qualities than the possession of uncommon ones; whose life was embittered not so much because they had imagination and sensibility, as because they had not prudence and true moral principles? If one chose to investigate the history of the first twenty tattered blackguards to be found lying on the benches of the watch-house or stewing in drunkenness and squalor in the Jerusalem Tap-room, it would not be difficult to write a much more moving book on the "Calamities of Shoemakers" or Street-porters, or any other class of handicrafts-men, than this of D'Israeli on Authors. It is the few ill-starred wretches, and the multitude of ill-behaved, that are miserable, in all ranks, and among writers just as elsewhere. Literature I do believe,

has keener pains connected with it than almost any other pursuit; but then it has also far livelier and nobler pleasures, and if you shudder at engaging in it on those terms, you ought also to envy the stupidity of other people, their insensibility, the meanness of their circumstances, whatever narrows their sphere of action, and adds more stagnation to the current of their feelings. The dangers with which intellectual enterprises are encompassed should arouse us to vigilance, to unwearied circumspection, to gain the absolute dominion of ourselves: they should not dishearten but instruct. You say rightly that you would not quit this way of life although you could: no one that has once tasted the nectar of science or literature, that will not thirst for it thenceforth to the end. Nor shall my own Scholar repent this her noble determination. Dangers beset her, neither few nor small; but her steadfastness and prudence will conquer them; she will yet be happy and famous beyond her hopes.

"Oh! if *this* were true!" you exclaim "but" — Nay, I will have no buts: it depends entirely upon yourself. I have no more hesitation in affirming that Nature has given you qualities enough to satisfy any reasonable ambition — to secure you the much longed-for elevation you pant after — than I have to believe my own existence. It is no doubt in your own power to frustrate all these hopes, to ruin the fairest promises it has been my chance to witness in any one, and to make your life as wretched as it will be useless. But I trust in God you will be better guided; you will learn in time to moderate your ardour, to cultivate the virtues of patience and self-command, to believe that the sole tho' certain road to excellence is through long tracts

of calm exertion and quiet study. Do think of this, my dear Jane, both for my sake and your own. Why will you vex and torment yourself so, for a precocious fruit, which Time itself would bring to a much happier and more glorious maturity? You must absolutely acquire far more knowledge before your faculties can have anything like fair-play: in your actual condition, I confess they often amaze me. When I was of your age, I had not half the skill. And what haste is there? Rousseau was above thirty before he suspected himself to be anything but a thievish apprentice, and a vagabond little-worth: Cowper became a poet at fifty, and found he was still in time enough. Will you also let me say that I continue to lament this inordinate *love of Fame* which agitates you so; and which, as I believe, lies at the root of all this mischief. I think this feeling unworthy of you: it is far too shallow a principle for a mind like yours. Do not imagine that I make no account of a glorious name: I think it the best of *external* rewards, but never to be set in competition with those that lie *within.* To depend for our highest happiness on the popular breath, to lie at the mercy of every scribbler, for our daily meed of enjoyment — does seem to me a very helpless state. It is the means of fame not the end that chiefly delights me; if I believed that I had done the very uttermost that I could for myself, had cultivated my soul to the very highest pitch that Nature meant it to reach, I think I could be happy tho' no suffrages at all were given me; my conscience would be at rest, I should actually *be* a worthy man, whatever I might *seem*. You may also take it as an indubitable truth that there is nothing lasting or satisfying in these applauses of

distance or death itself. You will scarcely understand what I would be at; I scarce do myself; but I feel clearly that I wish to be loved as well as admired. To be loved as I love Schiller and De Staël ! ! ! and that unless I believed that fame was to bring this about, I should not much value it. All women love admiration, and *I* do not pretend to be an exception to the general rule; but the hope of being admired could not of itself strengthen me against the obstacles and temptations that meet me in the course I am pursuing. No, it is to the hope of being loved as it were, in spite of *fate*, that I sacrifice without regret the follies pleasures and amusements of my age and sex. And it is this hope that keeps my heart from breaking when its affections recoil from the "iron breasts" around me back on itself. You will say that it is my own fault that I am not loved, *alive* and seen. It is not! Indeed it is not! All the hearts mine is cast among — all but one — are inaccessibly intrenched within their self-love. I might indeed attach many to me by benefits, or by the pleasure they find in my society, or simply by the need of some attachment; but of these I make no account. It is the "love of *moral esteem*," not the "love of gratitude" that I desire; and these love me for their own sake, not mine. But I am writing the greatest quantity of nonsense I ever committed to paper. Hurry and headache must plead for my intellect.

I have news for you that will I hope please you as much as it did me: my Mother wonders you do not think of coming out! ! ! — Now do you not see the fruit of my restrictions? Had you come sooner on your *own* invitation or mine, you would have

found nothing but cold looks, and I should have been kept on thorns until you left me: and now I am formally desired to invite you here, "in case it may be that you are standing on ceremony." And come when you like, Dear, you are sure of a hearty welcome. You cannot think how glad I am, for I make myself sure of your coming immediately, — no, not immediately, — for my Cousin will not be gone for a week. But do write soon and tell me what day you will come. — Oh, my poor head! and people are come to dinner, and I am not dressed. We have had company every day this week, and my lessons! *Wae's me!* Do not I beseech you read this *twice*. God bless you, my dear Friend. And believe me ever, —

Yours affectionately,

JANE B. WELSH.

My Mother was reading *Corinne*,[1] and we cannot get the third volume in English in the Town. Will you send it me. Mr. Aitken will get it for you, if you cannot.

LETTER 43

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

3, MORAY STREET, 4th February, 1823.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I daresay, if you have nothing better to occupy your thoughts, you have already marked me down for a very ungrateful or very lazy person, because I have not sooner answered your kind and most acceptable Letter. This, like many of your conclusions and

[1] By Madame de Staël.

mine, is far too hasty, and quite erroneous. By and by, you will find that I have written you no fewer than three Epistles since that date; two of which by the cruel hand of fate have been sent to the flames instead of to Haddington, and the third is still lying among *Corinne* and a heap of other books waiting till the Coach begins running, to come and pay its respects to you. Certainly, since the retreat from Moscow, there has been no weather like this: it would do credit to the Northernmost point of Nova Zembla. It is really quite piteous to see the once hale and portly Burghers of this City, all shrunk together, and cowering about under cloaks and dread-naughts and plaids of every description, their eyes streaming with tears, their lips cracked, their noses as blue as indigo; now encrusted with snow or soaked in rain, now wading ankle deep in melting ice, now tottering on slippery pavements, and ever and anon rushing down to the bosom of their frosty Mother with a squelch which astonishes the whole neighbourhood. The very dandies have forgot their struts and simperings as they walk: you may see their heels make a sudden sweep from beneath them, and point for a moment to the zenith, in an attitude which Vestris never practised. All this is quite heart-breaking — at least to a benevolent character: but it is one of those sorrows which complaining cannot mend; so I leave it to time and patience, "the sovran'st things on earth" for such ailments.

With regard to this much valued "invitation," I have already told you half a dozen times, and myself about five hundred, that I *will come*, if the life be in me. The object of my scribbling at present is to ask you whether Friday week will

do — that is, the second Friday from this date? If so, I propose to drink tea with you that evening, to spend Saturday and Sunday in talking about all manner of things with you, and then return on Monday-morning. You will write to me as soon as you have a moment's leisure, to let me know whether this will answer; and if it do, you may expect me without further notice. Present my kindest compliments to your Mother, and say all that is necessary on such an occasion. I cannot tell you how glad I am that things have turned out this way: I am going in future to obey your behests in all these things with the most implicit submission; you alone are fit to guide the *commonwealth*, my interference does nothing but drive it to confusion. Will you write to me this week — for I am anxious to know your determination. It is a whole twelvemonth since I have seen your face; but in ten days I shall, in spite of fate.

Excuse my haste and ineptitude, and this "diabolical pen." Write to me the first moment you have. I hope you will get the books one of these days. In the meantime be happy and contented in the interruption of your studies; we will set that and all other matters to rights when we meet: you have studied most heroically for the last three months; if we had our plans arranged, you will go on triumphantly. On Friday, then, I shall see you? God bless you, my dear Jane!

I am ever, your most affectionate Friend,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

Tell your Mother that *Corinne* is coming, and that she may keep it, if once in her hands, as long as she likes.

Letter 44

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

3, Moray Street, 18th February, 1823.

My dear Friend, — I am certainly a very idle person, or I should not again so soon be troubling you with my lucubrations. It were far better to profit by the wholesome excitement which your words and still more your presence never fails to inspire me with, than to speculate about it; better to obey the favourable impulse of my impressions than to spend time in recording them. But tho' "the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak": you must let me talk today: tomorrow I shall rise and be doing.

In spite of bad health and all its wretched *etceteras*, I am greatly pleased with this visit of mine. The kind hospitality of your Mother, the affectionate friendship of my own Jane are delightful to look back upon, in spite of all obstructions. To *you* I know not how I can be grateful enough for the pleasure which you have both the power and the will to diffuse over even the most desolate portions of my existence. If I did not trust that there was a long and brighter future before us, I should feel quite over-burdened with my debt. Another genuine gratification which I have derived from this excursion is the conviction it has given me of your rapid and constant improvement. It seems to me as if your mind were almost doubled in power and real wealth since I talked with you last year. I am proud to think of your noble devotion, to compare the way in which you spend your hours with that in which most young women spend theirs. The spectacle of so many temptations vanquished, so much ardour

expended in such a cause, would interest me in the meanest of my fellow mortals. I pray that you may long continue so gloriously employed: you have reason in the meantime to be thankful that you have at last fairly entered on so extensive and so praiseworthy a field of exertions; I feel more and more certain that no other could have offered any free and profitable expansion to your faculties; as a mere Lady you must have felt even in the most brilliant station completely unhappy, your utmost efforts might have been required to prevent your very gifts from degenerating into vices. But it is not merely in an intellectual point of view that I congratulate myself on the progress you are making. As a woman, it strikes me, that your improvement is not less marked. Your affections I think are becoming more catholic, your tastes more simple; you seemed far more kindly and affectionate and every way amiable. Perhaps my individual experience corrupts my judgement; but I certainly hope more confidently than ever that you are yet to realize all my anticipations of you — to be not only a shining ornament of literature, but what is even better, the happy and happy-making Wife of some gallant character that will know how to prize you; — to gain both the laurel of intellectual reputation, and what our Schiller calls the *crown of womanhood*, "*liebend eines Mannes Herz beglückend* [loving making happy the heart of a man]." — I have often thought of Sunday-night, and wondered what it was that pleased me so in it. We said nothing worth remembering, the scene was simple, our employments still simpler: what then made me happy? The French say truly: *Le plus grand des plaisirs, c'est l'abandon de soi-même* [The greatest of pleasures is to abandon oneself]. It is such hours

as those that I look back upon as on something far finer than the common stuff that life is made of. If I thought that we two could always spend our evenings so, I fear I should be tempted to forget my own principles and your interests both; and assail you with all my rhetoric to fly with me to some Highland or Lowland glen, no matter where or of what kind, so we had it to ourselves! But ah! But ah! what would my rhetoric avail? Nor am I such a ninny as to wish it should avail. I know well that there is no rest which is not purchased by toil; the first great want of our mind is vigorous action, the next is outward means: but valleys and glens are places of idleness and privation; and pleasure without its fit attendants is but a curse the more. So I must not think of glens: we are far better as we are.

But really I am prosing very unaccountably: I must proceed to business. Here are the first two volumes of *Delphine*[1] for your Mother; and I have sent John to see if he can get Boccaccio for you. Even yet I am in doubt about the sending of it: four years ago I should have at once decided in the negative. As it is, however, you must venture. The book after all has not *many* impurities; and over your mind, these will pass like breath across a mirror, darkening it for a moment, and only for a moment.[2]

[1] Mrs. Welsh had desired Carlyle to send her "Delphine," and Miss Welsh had expressed a wish to read Boccaccio's works. She may have heard Edward Irving speak admiringly of Boccaccio, or more probably it was her favourite Byron's high praises of him that induced her to choose a book in every way so unsuitable to one of her years and sex.

[2] Thus also Milton: —

> "Evil into the mind of God or man
> May come and go, so unapproved, and leave
> No spot or blame behind."
>
> "Paradise Lost," v. 117–9.

I believe ladies do read the work whenever they can: Mrs. Buller speaks without hesitation of having perused it in French. After all, perhaps you may not get it, or if you do, may not like it; and more preliminaries are superfluous. Boccaccio is the least of all like Schiller or your other favourites.

Now have you finished *Las Cases?*[1] I long to hear of your having procured De Staël, and being fairly set forth in your literary enterprise. I have even some fears that the book will not be forthcoming: for I tried yesterday, and found that except from Mr. Aitken there was no chance for it. I pray you ascertain this as soon as may be; and if you succeed not, we shall strike out something else as good. The title of the work I think is: Madame Necker's Life of Madame de Staël. Mr. Bradfute was the Publisher here, and so is likely to have a copy of it.

I have read over the *Rival Brothers*[2] — and with

[1] "Mémorial de Ste-Hélène," par Comte de Las Cases (1821–1823).

[2] Miss Welsh's "Tragedy," written when she was fourteen years of age. It is in five short acts, neatly written in a childish hand, on foolscap, and though much faded is still quite legible. Dr. Welsh appears to have sent it to Mr. Terrot (afterwards "Bishop of Edinburgh") for his criticism and correction. Mr. Terrot replied as follows in an undated letter: "My dear Sir, — I return you the 'Rival Brothers' which (though I had heard it much praised) is much beyond what I expected to find it. Considering her age it gives a fair promise of what she may hereafter be able to do. There is considerable invention and the language is almost uniformly correct. The metre is sometimes deficient. I have taken the liberty of marking with a pencil the objectionable parts. . . . Blank verse is upon the whole much more difficult to write than any of our rhyming measures. The best example of its Tragic form is Massinger. — I hope Miss Welsh will take my remarks in good part; — excepting the measure there is little room for correction. — Yours truly, — C. H. Terrot."

more real enjoyment than any regular tragedy has given me of late. I am not going to flatter you with talk about the promises of genius which it affords, tho' I must say that for a girl of fourteen, it seems a very curious affair: but my interest was arrested by other causes. To me it was as if I had been surveying on the mountain-tops the sources of some clear and smiling stream along whose banks I had often lingered with delight before unknown to me — whose widening more majestic course I hoped yet to follow till the great Ocean should receive us both. For some such reasons I suppose it is that I *like* the little tragedy, and must ask you to let me keep it till you want it for some better purpose. I must also request you to be very careful of the small *arm-chair*,[1] which stands in the room beside your parlour! I know not how I felt when I saw the poor little thing standing so quietly beside the hearth: it brought by-gone days before my fancy; I could have rhymed like a Lake-poet over it. This is very childish? Very! but what can I do to help it? You must let me prate for once.

At length however, my course is well nigh done. I must lay aside this dissipated humour, and begin to work. The day after tomorrow I am vowing to begin another *Tale*. It was you that bade me, so you must answer for the issue. I have long been very idle, and am growing more and more stupid every day. Scarce anything can rouse me, and everything goes to wreck when I cease exertion. I wish you were beside me constantly: under your auspices, I feel as if it were a crime to let sickness or any other cause keep me one moment from my speed. You are

[1] Miss Welsh's "Child-chair," mentioned so lovingly in Carlyle's Will, "Reminiscences," etc.

growing far more merciful of late: but should I abuse your mercy?

I look forward to the beginning of March with hopes of spending many, many an hour beside you. For God's sake do get the matter all arranged as you said; send them all away, and stay here a month by yourself. You need not fear that I will incommode you too much: I promise to make you absolute Mistress of my movements in that respect; to go and to come exactly as you shall require. Only you must if possible contrive to get me some employment that will keep me beside you some hours every day. You must read German or do something: I leave the whole with yourself; for you have undertaken to manage the *commonwealth*, and I put all faith in your administration. Exert your skill then: you have *two* to care for, and one of them is very sticklish about his interests.

I had a long and very hearty Letter the other day from Irving, who professes to be dying for news from Scotland. His mind I can see is in a very foamy state, which he is evidently struggling to repress or conceal. After all abatements, he is one of the very best fellows breathing. Do you mark this paragraph? "I pray you to give my dearest affection to my beloved pupil Jane Welsh, if" (what an *if!*) "you are in correspondence with her. I shall never cease to love her like a Brother. Now that I have shaken off the lethargy of winter, I shall write to her."

But when will she (this beloved pupil) write to me? I am waiting patiently and hoping well. We are now grown *old friends*, there should be less reserve, we ought at last to know each other. You have written excellently of late: I only ask that you do not "fall away from your first love."

Here is John with old *Boccaccio!* you will get the *Novelle* tomorrow. Tell me all that you have done about De Staël; how you like *Götz*,[1] and *Gillies*, and what other thing you want. If you would gratify me, show me I entreat you how I may be of service to you. Hitherto my will has not been faulty; but alas! for the performance! — Write to me as soon as possible: let the Letter be as long and careless and garrulous and true-hearted as it can be made. You must walk out *every day*, when the weather is dry: you *must* if you love yourself or me. When otherwise, play at shuttlecock for two full hours.

The Bullers talk of going to Largs in Summer: I will send to Mainhill for the ambling Galloway, and ride over all the moors in the West. I expect it will make me quite whole and sound. Poor old Kemp![2] I cannot get him out of my head. Sometimes I have almost been ready to ask *you* to go and visit him some mid-day. It were an errand of mercy which would not disgrace you. He requires to be consoled and humoured, and fed with hopes; and the people that go near him seem to contradict the poor soul too much. I really pity him from the heart.

But I must conclude this piebald scrawl. I am not now *upon my good behaviour before the Court*, or I should dread the censure of my Judge for some things I have scribbled. Write soon: and believe me to be,

My dear Jane,

Ever most affectionately yours,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

Tell your Mother she can have the rest of *Delphine* whenever she pleases. Be sure you regulate

[1] "Götz von Berlichingen," by Goethe.

[2] A Haddington neighbour.

this matter of Madame de Staël, and above everything, *Remember the Ides of March!* If you do not *come*, it will go near to produce convulsion in the State. Again farewell! "The Ides of March!"

Letter 45

Miss Welsh to T. Carlyle, Edinburgh

Haddington, Friday, '28 February, 1823.'

My dear Friend, — I flatter myself you will by this time be out of all patience. I should and would have written to you sooner could I have got it done. Since ever the fine weather commenced we have been paying for the respite we enjoyed during the storm. The "callers by profession," of whom our friend Dr. Joralie speaks so disrespectfully, have been swarming in every quarter, and so extremely lavish of their civilities to us that I have scarce had time to learn my lessons, let alone scribbling. You have positively smothered me with books: I entreat you will send me no more till I have done with those I have got, — which will be I should think, about this time next year. I return *Gillies:* when I have made some acquirements in philosophy, I shall perhaps have fortitude to attempt it again. At present I should as soon undertake to climb Ben Nevis as read it to the end. I am staggering through *Goethe* as fast as I can, — that is very slowly. Schiller was nothing to this. *Götz* puzzles me so excessively that I thought it advisable to let it alone for a little, and try something else. I chose *Stelle* as I had read it in French; and with great difficulty I have got through it and part of *Clavigo*. I do not

think I shall like Goethe much unless he improves greatly. He has fire enough, but it is not the celestial fire of Schiller. I have read no more of *Boccaccio* than his description of the plague, which is extremely powerful. From the hesitation you seem to have in allowing me to read him, I felt inclined to return it immediately; but on reflexion I thought it silly to deprive myself of the pleasure of reading a clever work because it contained some exceptionable passages which I might pass over even if I found them disagreeable; so I shall go on, at least as long as I find it for my good. I like Dr. Joralie very much; and I would like him still better if he was not so immoderately fond of tropes and figures. One cannot serve God and Mammon; and I should think Fancy and Metaphysics are not less distinct. The ingenious Dr. perplexes both himself and his readers in trying to combine them.

I have found such a prize since you were here: at the top of a dark lane at the back part of the Town, I have discovered — you would never guess what! — I have actually discovered a Genius!!! Was there ever anything so fortunate? I was so much in want of something to give an interest to my leisure hours: and what could fill up the vacuum better than this? Even a Lover would not have answered my purpose half so well. The said Genius is a beggar-boy, about sixteen years of age; he lives with his Mother, an old miserable woman, in a kind of cell four feet square or thereabouts. Never had genius such a habitation: one stool, a palsied table, a sort of wooden press and the woman's bedstead, compose the whole furniture of the little sorrowful dwelling. And yet it has a look of cleanness, I may almost say of taste, that keeps one from shuddering

at its abject poverty. The black clay walls are almost entirely covered with drawings, — heads, globes, landscapes, caricatures, all sorts of things, many of them displaying great invention and a considerable knowledge of the principles of Art. A very perfect model of a Man-of-war stands in the window-place ; and the table is loaded with a number of books so tattered so smoked they might have been the property of Noah. The ship, the drawings are the handiwork of my Genius; and the books have been collected by him from God knows where. Nor are these all his treasures: the wooden press contains many more. You would be amazed to see this humble imitation of an Artist's cabinet: its motley contents are arranged with so much order and taste! From this repository he produced a small budget of manuscript poetry, which he got from a woman he said, that could not read it. No wonder! Such a manuscript! Such poetry! However he seemed to set a high value on it, most likely because it is the only *poetical work* in his library. I asked him if he was fond of poetry. The creature's eyes sparkled as he answered me, "Oh, grand! I like it better than onything, unless it be drawing and histories!" If ever there was a Genius in the world, this is one! It cannot be education, still less example, that has given this bent to his mind: he has had no instruction except a few lessons in reading, and he never saw anybody draw in his life. And then, what obstacles has he struggled with in the gratification of his taste! His whole life has been one fight with want. In Summer he used to work for his bread in the Public Gardens ; but at present all the subsistence of himself and his Mother is eighteen pence a-week from

the Town, and the uncertain charity of individuals. He says he cannot get work; but I suspect the truth is the poor Genius has a most Genius-like distaste for all kinds of vulgar labour. And besides, his Mother unfortunately (she broke her leg five weeks ago) requires his constant attendance. Yet all the misery of his situation cannot drive him from his employment within doors. He is at his books early and late; and tho' he seldom knows what it is to have his hunger satisfied, there is scarce a day that he does not defraud his stomach by spending a part of his little substance on drawing-paper. He is a Genius beyond all doubts! And I expect I shall live to see my beggar-boy a great man.

Mr. Aitken declares he never heard of the Life of Madame de Staël. How provoking! I am sure if I were in his shop, I could find it; but no matter. Think of something else. I was delighted with *Las Cases:* you must read it. It gives the perfecting stroke to Napoleon's character. Others have granted him a brilliant genius and a lofty soul; *Las Cases* has added to these a noble and feeling heart. — Will you call at Dickson's and buy half-a-pound of mustard! ! ! Send it in the next parcel: my Mother will be in your debt till we come to Town. I am glad you are satisfied with your visit here: I cannot say I thought it was made as agreeable to you as it might have been. But that mad girl — I could not help it. — Write me long and soon. Send your Tale, and take care of your health. — I have heard from Mr. Irving, — I will tell you about him next time.

Your affectionate — in excessive haste —

Jane B. Welsh.

Letter 46

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

3, Moray Street, 4th March, 1823.

My dear Friend, — I have scarcely a moment of time at present; yet it seems wrong to let these books lie waiting another day, so I must write to you under whatever disadvantages. The Milliners are settled with, the Mustard is ready; and the sooner you are done with my dulness, the better.

I am glad that you have found so innocent a pastime as the fostering of a Genius. Your Knight of Industry appears in truth to be somewhat of a singular character; but I demur as to the conclusion you have arrived at respecting him. In my time I have fallen in with several such personages, youths that hated labour, made models of ships, drew pictures, and loved to read ballads and penny histories; but they all enlisted to be soldiers or marines, or eloped with mountebanks, or became pickpockets or candle-snuffers in strolling companies of players, and were all shot or hanged or starved to death when their hour came; not one of them turned out a Genius. This is hard measure, but so goes the world. I hope better things, however, of this poor boy; and I love you for taking any thought about his fortunes. If some house- or sign-painter would accept of him for an apprentice, the luckless might earn himself a subsistence in the mean time, might gradually acquire habits of regular industry, and by and by, if he have any talents, rise into some more respectable department of the pictorial art. I am really partly sorry for the poor boy.

This *contretemps* of Mr. Aitken's is particularly provoking. I called at his shop on Saturday, and made a large snuffy lout of a person, who seemed to be his factotum, go and rummage all the premises for the book, as if I had been going to buy it; but tho' this gentleman "perfectly recollected the publication," and engaged to find it for me in five minutes — he did not keep his word. The Work he brought down from the upper story was not Madame Necker's *Memoirs of Madame de Staël*, but Madame de Staël's *Memoirs of M. Necker*.[1] He finished by declaring that the book was not in Town. — What is to be done now? I have been trying to invent something suitable for you; but nothing can I think of, that I could describe here, or that (I fear) you would not receive with a huff if I could. There are Essays and so forth that I might speak of; but all of them have more or fewer drawbacks; and I imagine it will be better for us to postpone the consideration of the business entirely till your arrival in Edinburgh, when all the pros and cons of it may be discussed much more conveniently. I am really vexed that you are not going forward with any composition: the art of giving out ideas is about as essential and certainly more laborious than that of gathering them in. We must really make an effort to remedy this deficiency, and that as early as possible. In the mean time do not disturb yourself about it; go on with your Gibbon and your other studies calmly and diligently, and assure yourself

[1] The book which Carlyle wanted would be "Notice sur le caractère et les écrits de Madame de Staël, par Madame Necker de Saussure" (a relative and intimate friend of the Baroness); the book offered to him was probably Madame de Staël's "Du caractère de M. Necker" (her father).

that if not in the best of all modes, your employment is in the next to the best. I do trust you will not grow idle or irregular again; there is nothing satisfactory to be accomplished by you if you do; everything if you avoid doing it. You must make another effort upon *Götz:* it is hardest at the first. This Goethe has as much in him as any ten of them: he is not a mere Bacchanalian rhymester, cursing and foaming and laying about him as if he had breathed a gallon of nitrous oxide, or pouring forth his most inane philosophy and most maudlin sorrow in strains that "split the ears of the groundlings"; but a man of true culture and universal genius, not less distinguished for the extent of his knowledge and the profoundness of his ideas and the variety of his feelings, than for the vivid and graceful energy, the inventive and deeply meditative sagacity, the skill to temper enthusiasm with judgement, which he shows in exhibiting them. Wordsworth and Byron! They are as the Christian Ensign and Captain Bobadil before the Duke of Marlboro'. You must go on with *Götz:* it will serve you to read while *here*, if it do no better. I wish it would.

There is no *Tale* here then? Alas! no! Man is not master of his destiny: I was just commencing a *most elaborate performance*, when a second Epistle of Irving gave quite a new direction to my thoughts. He had been speaking with Taylor of the *London Magazine;* and was then full of a project that I should begin publishing in detail by that channel, a work I was speaking about last Summer, a kind of picture-gallery of literary great men, arranged under their proper classes and bedizened with all the ornaments that my poor pallet could afford them. I have sent him to enquire more minutely; and it seems likely

the thing will take effect: I am to commence with Schiller. Heaven grant I were commenced! Idle, I am the most miserable wretch on the face of the Earth, and my present circumstances make it difficult to work as I should. I am going to be in a dreadful *toss* if the business proceeds; yet I wish it may. Meantime I am reading Grubers *Wieland:* he is about equal to Doctor Joralie, our worthy friend; a more learned man, but at bottom another of the same. —

Now do you not see the Ides of March [1] are come and gone, and the weather is getting very tolerable. Why do *you* not come then? I beg of you to set out without loss of time; and let me see your sweet face and hear your wicked tongue again. We really should see one another oftener; in a year or so, I shall be gone Heaven knows whither; you will be wedded to some gallant Squire; and "we shall go on our ways and see each other no more." [2] *Deus avertat!* [God forbid!] —

T. Carlyle.

Write soon or I shall lose patience; come soon, or *ditto*, — infallibly.

Letter 47

Miss Welsh to T. Carlyle, Edinburgh

Haddington, Monday, '24th March, 1823.'

My dear Friend, — I have been longer in writing than usual, and this time I cannot plead either

[1] Either this letter is misdated (by Carlyle) or he has confused the Ides with the Kalends. March is one of the four months in which the Ides fall on the 15th. The allusion is, of course, to Shakespear's "Julius Cæsar."

[2] *Cf.* "So away he [Pliable] went, and Christian saw him no more." — "Pilgrim's Progress," p. 8 (Cambridge ed., 1864).

excessive occupation or impertinent interruptions. But I have not patience to do anything when my mind is not at rest; and for the last week it has been in a horrible hubbub.

These nonsensical people with their *Heirathsgedanken* [thoughts of marriage] and *Heirathsvorschlagen* [proposals of marriage] will assuredly drive me mad: like Carlos *ich fürchte die wie die Pest* [I fear them like the plague]. — To cause unhappiness to others, above all to those I esteem, and would do anything within reach of my duties and abilities to serve, is the cruellest pain I know; but positively I cannot fall in love; and to sacrifice myself out of pity, is a degree of generosity of which I am not capable. Besides matrimony under any circumstances would interfere shockingly with my plans.

The philosopher that used to thank the gods he was born a man, and not a woman, must have had more sense than the generality of his calling. Truly our fate is very deplorable: as soon as a poor girl takes that decisive step called *coming out*, she is exposed to a host of vexations men know nothing of. We are the weakest portion of the human kind, and nevertheless we have to bear two-thirds of the burden of sorrows our unwise First Parents left behind them. Really it is very unjust! — What I would give to be a Prime Minister or a Commander-in-Chief! An old woman that boiled blankets in this Town used to say when I was leaping the Mill-dam, some dozen years ago, "that Providence had stickit a fine callant."[1] She understood my character better than any body I have had to do with since. "The extreme enviableness of my con-

[1] *I. e.*, stopped or arrested a fine *lad* in his career.

dition!" Oh, dear me! I wish you had a trial of it for one twelvemonth.

What a wee darling this quartern-loaf[1] of yours must be! So clever and lively and affectionate! If ever I am in Annandale again I will go and see her, for I am certain I should like her dearly. Her little Verses have brought to light as many infant Geniuses in Haddington as will in process of time set Scotland in a blaze. Every Mother, that I have read them to, can recollect some equally surprising proof of abilities in a boy or girl of her own; and I am told of children (to all appearance lumps of stupidity) that have performed feats no less marvellous than Johnson's Epitaph on the Duck.[2]

My beggar Genius is turning out very badly: for my life I cannot get him to wash his face or refrain from lying. He is very greedy and very ungrateful; in short he has abundance of talent but not one virtue that I can discover. He is not even a Christian: his Father and Mother lived together five days; at the end of which time of matrimonial felicity, the man (according to his Wife's statement) went out and — never came in again (if you saw the woman, you would admire his sense). And so the poor object of a child having no Father forthcoming, was never baptised. He is now old enough to

[1] Carlyle in sending Miss Welsh a copy of his Sister Jean's "Poetical Letter" remarks that the little poetess is hardly bigger than a good "quartern-loaf." — See appendix A, No. 11.

[2] When only three years old little Samuel chanced to tread on and kill a duckling, the eleventh of a brood, and it is said that he immediately dictated to his mother the following epitaph:

"Here lies good master duck,
Whom Samuel Johnson trod on;
If it had lived, it had been *good luck*,
For then we 'd had an *odd one*."

take the vows upon himself, but all Dr. Lorimer's eloquence cannot prevail with him to undergo the ceremony. He seems to have an instinctive repugnance to cold water; he cannot even drink it. I do not mean to have anything more to do with him;—not because he is unchristened—there is something romantic in that circumstance; and not even because he is wicked. Until he is hanged I am sanguine enough to entertain hopes of reclaiming him; but my praises have given him such *éclat* that I find my patronage is no longer necessary. A great Family in the neighbourhood, that would never have known his existence, had they not heard of him from me, have thought proper to take him into their own hands without paying the least regard to my opinion or intentions in respect to him. At first I felt as sore upon the business as a Doctor that had been jockeyed out of a patient; but now I consider it a fortunate riddance. Besides, Providence has furnished me with another *protégé* to supply his place: a Genius of Industry. It is an Irish Pedlar with a broken back, about nine years old and eighteen inches high;—a calm, decided, independent character,—the very reverse of the Artist. He hops about with a crutch under one arm and a basket on the other; and maintains three sisters younger than himself, by selling tape and needles. Shandy has the merit of this discovery: if he had not barked at the little gentleman, I should assuredly have walked over him.

I have finished the second volume of Gibbon; the article on Christianity is really capital. Goethe gets no easier. I am near the end of *Egmont* which I like infinitely better than the two following pieces. At last I am beginning to recognize the Goethe *you*

admire. Sir Walter [Scott] must be a bit of a thief: the first interview between Amy and Lord Leicester is quite a translation of Clara's meeting with Egmont, but the English version has not half the fire of the original. I began writing all the passages I could not find out; but they came so thick I thought it better to wait till we meet for their explanation. Boccaccio I return! — I have read the Introduction and three of the Tales which I took by chance from different parts of the book: in the two first my choice was fortunate, and I was inclined to think the work had been belied; — the third was enough: I will never open the book again.

I believe we shall not be in Town till the beginning of the month. Do not be impatient: should we go now my stay would be short, and I should be dragged about all the time; for my Mother has made up her mind not to go to Dumfriesshire till our Highland Cousin has returned to his glen. But in April I may hope for a little of my own will.

Mr. Kemp is getting gradually worse; he cannot hold out long. I have seen him frequently, but I think my visits rather agitate than amuse him. — How in the name of wonder did you contrive to scrape acquaintance with my little Arm-chair?

Thank you for the mustard. My Mother thanks you for *Delphine*, but declares she will never undertake six volumes of love again. I think such beautiful love is very endurable. Do write forthwith and at length. Compliments to your "*Amplification*."[1] I must see the *Life of Schiller* before it goes.

Yours faithfully,

JANE WELSH.

[1] Carlyle's brother, John Aitken Carlyle (afterwards Dr. Carlyle). Carlyle seems to have told Miss Welsh that John was a bigger man (physically) than himself.

Letter 48

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

3, Moray Street, Wednesday-night,
'26 March, 1823.'

My dear Friend, — You have not done a more beneficial action for a long time than writing to me last Monday. I had already spent too much of the preceding week in the delightful exercise of *that Christian virtue*, for which both of us are so remarkable; I had wearied myself in the region of conjecture, and found little comfort within its ample domain. On the evening in question, I had just brought out my papers, and was sitting down to begin that weary Life of Schiller — in the most vinegar humour that a man could well be in — with a head empty of ideas, and a heart oppressed by as many chagrins as might have served a dozen hearts — when her Serene Lowness, the Dowager Wilkie,[1] came gliding in, with — "a parcel Sir!" I felt myself grow half a hundred-weight lighter whenever I saw it. Your Letter wrought upon me as if by art magic: I was another man when I had read it. To use a Slawkenbergian[2] figure, it was as if you had lit up a blazing fire in the dark damp haunted chamber of some old ruined Gothic pile, scattering the ghosts and spectres into the shades of Erebus and tinging the grim walls once more with the colours of jovial life and warm substantial cheer. I declared within myself that you were the very best of all the daugh-

[1] Mrs. Wilkie, Carlyle's landlady, at 3, Moray Street.

[2] For Slawkenbergius and his "Book on Noses," see "Tristram Shandy," ch. 38.

ters of Eve: I proceeded to my work as if I had grown young again. — It is pity that this magical force will not always continue; pity that the *fire* at last goes out, and leaves the poor mind's chamber cold and dark, and haunted by the Devil as before! Yet after all, we should be thankful for our mercies: there are parts of life too fine to be the general material of it; and virtue itself, they say, is nothing but the victory, often fiercely struggled for, of free-will over fate. Let it be so.

I know not how I felt when I read of these marryings and givings in marriage. It seems to me as if our destiny were yet long to be intermingled, as if we were yet to walk side by side thro' many bright scenes, to assist each other in many a noble purpose; and Oh! what a pitiful conclusion to all this would a vulgar wedding make! It is true they manage it otherwise in the common world: there the great object of a young woman's existence is to get a rich Husband, and a fine house, and give dinners; just as it is the great object of ravens to find carrion, or of pawn-brokers to amass a *plum;* and the sooner they attain their respective destinations it is surely the better. But if each creature ought to follow the good its nature aims at, then *you* are right to take another path — right to press forward towards the golden summit of mental eminence, and to shrink at no sacrifice which you believe that elevation will repay you for. The time *will* come indeed, when you must "fall in love" and be wedded as others have been; it is the general law, and must be fulfilled: but I fear not that I shall ever have the pain of seeing your happiness entrusted to one unworthy however desirous of the charge, or the high ambitions of your youth given

up for anything less sacred than the feelings of the heart, if these unhappily should come to oppose them. I say *unhappily;* for the love of knowledge is a passion which, once in possession of the mind, can hardly ever be extinguished; it is noble in its nature too, and like other noble passions elevates itself into a kindred with all the virtues of the character: if stinted, and still more if checked, in its gratification, it leaves a painful hankering behind it, which is inconsistent with true peace of mind, and often, I imagine, with the free exercise of the moral faculties. In the mean time, therefore, you must just continue on your way. If I had my way you should not be married till — not till a considerable period after this. Literary women have many things to suffer, but they have likewise something to enjoy. I confess it appears to me more enviable to be a sister of Madame de Staël's for half a year, than "to suckle fools and chronicle small beer"[1] for half a century.

But I must cease to preach, for the text is plain without commentary, and I have other things to do. You are right to keep by Gibbon, since you have begun it: there is no other tolerable history of those times and nations, within the reach of such readers as we are; it is a kind of bridge that connects the antique with the modern ages. And how gorgeously does it swing across the gloomy and tumultuous chasm of those barbarous centuries! Gibbon is a man whom one never forgets — unless oneself deserving to be forgotten; the perusal of his work forms an epoch in the history of one's mind. I know you will admire Gibbon, yet I do not expect or wish that you should love him. He has but a

[1] "Othello," Act ii. sc. 1.

coarse and vulgar heart, with all his keen logic and glowing imagination and lordly irony: he worships power and splendour; and suffering virtue, the most heroic devotedness if unsuccessful, unarrayed in the pomp and circumstance of outward glory, has little of his sympathy. To the Christians he is frequently very unfair: if he had lived now, he would have written differently on these points. I would not have you love him; I am sure you will not. Have you any notion what an *ugly* thief he was? Jack brought down his *Life* today, and it has a profile of his whole person — alas for Mlle. Curchod! Alas for her daughter Wilhelmina Necker who wished to marry him, when she was thirteen — not out of love to him but to her Mother! I would have sent you this *Life*, but it is a large quarto — and I knew not if you would receive it patiently. Should you wish it, write to me tomorrow and I will send it out. There is some amusement in it, but you will relish it more, when you know more fully and think more highly of the studied labours of the mind which it shows you in *déshabille*.

I am also glad that you like my thrice illustrious Goethe, and can *not* understand him. What expounding and reading and chit-chatting we shall have together when you come! I beg only that you do not disappoint me again. At first I was rather disconcerted at this postponement: I had calculated on your arrival as a perfect certainty; nay it was only on Monday, that I got into the most wonderful flurry at what I conceived to be the actual sight of you! The small divine who was with me on Princes Street might as well have spoken to the winds, I could answer his prosing statements but by monosyllables which I daresay

had no connection oftener than once with the "subject matter of his discourse": the lady before us seemed to have your very dress and form and gait, and I heard not what he said. — Alas! we overtook this beatific vision and she had a nose about the length of a moderate *dibble!*[1] So abrupt is often the transition from the height of poetry to the depth of prose.

On second thoughts, however, I am satisfied. By the time you arrive, I shall have finished Schiller;[2] I shall see more of you, and be more at leisure to see you. It will be absolutely cruel, if you do not come about the very beginning of the month. We could be so happy, I often think, wandering at large beneath these clear Spring skies, talking over all our plans and hopes, arguing or discussing — or doing nothing at all beside each other! You *must* come in less than a fortnight. You will write to me just once before that time, and the next message will be that "Miss Welsh condescends to allow the dyspeptical Philosopher to behold the light of her countenance tomorrow-morning about ten." Said Philosopher will be punctual to the hour, and promises to conduct himself with great submissiveness and propriety. If you have any heart — which I sometimes do believe is the case, in spite of all your sinful indifference and manifold railleries — you will think of this and do it. I look forward to April as to a *white month.*

You do not say a word about *composition* this time — because I suppose you have had other things to mind. We will settle all that when we meet. Bring *Götz* with you also, and we will decipher it, tho' it

[1] A gardener's tool for planting cabbages, etc.

[2] *I. e.*, Part I. of the "Life of Schiller."

were as dark as the *Linen Books*. I like you better for dismissing that ancient sinner Giovan Boccaccio: he is a wicked knave with all his talents, and intellectual pleasure may be dearly purchased at such a risk. You are yourself throughout, my own noble Jane in everything. — I rejoice too that you have done with the Genius: those Geniuses are the most arrant littleworths in nature. Your Irish tapeman, I shall be bound, is worth ten of him. Poor little hopper; and praise-worthy Shandy to spy him out!

Now have I not tired you enough for once? There is poor Schiller lying too, at whom I must have a hit or two before I sleep. It will be an invaluable Life this of Schiller's, were it once completed: so splendid and profound and full of *unction* — Oh! I could beat my brains out, when I think what a miserable pithless ninny I am! Would it were in my power either to write like a man or honestly to give up the attempt forever. Chained to the earth by native gravitation and a thousand wretched fetters, I am miserable unless I be soaring in the empyrean; and thus between the lofty will and the powerless deed, I have no peace, no peace. Sometimes I could almost run distracted; my wearied soul seems as if it were hunted round within its narrow enclosure by a whole legion of the dogs of Tartarus, which sleep not, night or day. In fact I am never happy except when *full* of business, and *nothing more*. The secret of all is "I have no genius," and like Andrew Irving's horse, I *have* "a *dibbil* of a temper." We must just submit!

Boyd the pursy Bookseller wishes me to translate Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, which I have told him is very clever. It will not be determined for some weeks — not till I see where I am to be and how,

during Summer. Come, my dear Jane, and let us consider all these matters! Come! Come! I am vehemently longing to see you. — Write at any rate when your Mother has finished *Delphine* — sooner if you want Gibbon. My "Amplification" greets you most respectfully. My best compliments to your Mother, and say I am much of her mind in the affair.[1] —

Yours, *Mia Cara, per sempre,*
THOMAS CARLYLE.

Excuse this crumpled paper; I knew not how to fold it, and have much more to say than it would hold. Write to me immediately — and *come*, if you would make me happy.

LETTER 49

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

3, MORAY STREET, 6th April, 1823.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — You judged quite correctly in supposing that a short Letter or any Letter at all would satisfy me more than none. The one you send me has more delightful things in it than some that I have got of thrice the bulk.[2] You are a very excellent person — when you please: it is altogether charming to be your servant in these moods. May Heaven bless you for thinking that "we shall never quarrel more!" I myself design that we shall quarrel many thousand times, before all is done; each quarrel to last for fifteen minutes at the utmost,

[1] Of "Delphine." — See close of Letter 47.
[2] The Letter referred to has not been preserved.

then we to kiss and agree and be better friends than ever. Any longer feud I would not for the world. You and I are two originals for certain "in our own humble way": it is very kind in Fortune to have brought us together; otherwise, we might have gone on single-handed to the end of time. The day when you finally cast me off I shall regard as the very blackest in my history.

"Angry at you!" My dear Jane, I was never angry at you in my life, and do believe I never shall be seriously so. I cannot understand what sort of clay the man is made of that could be angry at you: I would have him drummed out of the Earth as an interloper and a counterfeit. My worst feeling towards you is pain at seeing you uncomfortable, and anxiety lest you may spoil your future happiness. Even on this subject I have no serious fears; but there is no end to one's scruples and suspicions. Formerly, I used to feel afflicted at your contemptuousness and want of constancy in your emotions; now I am turned to the other extreme, and begin to dread that you are growing too serious. In fact I think I have noticed in you of late a tendency to contemplative melancholy, and what they term a romantic turn of mind — not the romance which milliners experience when they think of becoming actresses or running off with young grocers; but that sickness of noble hearts, that deep and sad feeling of the nothingness of the world, which is apt to arise from too exclusive a pursuit of things high and spiritual, and too great an isolation from the every day interests and enjoyments of life. I fear there *is* some truth in this. If so, my dear Jane, let me entreat you with the earnest voice of affection to guard against the approaches of this black demon,

which has poisoned the existence of so many men of genius, and converted the world which they might have enlightened and adorned into a prison-house which they have deformed and disgraced. It is an evil of the first magnitude — the want of which almost compensates to the *servum pecus* for all their other wants. Fight against such thoughts, and fly when you cannot conquer. There is no efficient remedy but mingling ourselves as much as possible in the solid living concerns of our fellow-creatures: these shadows disappear when we come forth from the cell of our own meditations into the cheerful light of day. You may feel that the people about you are frivolous and shallow and unworthy of your sympathies: no doubt they are so; but still they are our brethren, and it is the inflexible law of nature, that *whoever withdraws from them is miserable.*

As to your literary hopes, entertain them confidently! There is to me no better symptom of what is in you than your despair of getting it expressed. Cannot write! My dear Pupil, you have no idea of what a task it is to everyone, when it is taken up in that solemn way. Did you never hear of Rousseau lying in his bed and painfully wrenching every syllable of his *Nouvelle Heloïse* from the obscure complexities of his imagination. He composed every sentence of it, on an average, *five times over;* and often when he took up the pen, the whole concern was vanished quite away! John James [Rousseau] is my only comfort when I sit down to write. I could frequently swear that I am the greatest dunce in creation: the cooking of a paragraph is little better than the labour of the Goldmaker; I sweat and toil and keep tedious vigil, and at last there runs out from the tortured

melting-pot an ingot — of solid pewter. There is no help but patient diligence, and *that will conquer everything*. Never waver, my own Jane! I shall yet "stand a-tiptoe!" at your name. Not write! I declare if I had known nothing of you but your Letters, I should have pronounced you to be already an excellent writer. Depend upon it, this is nothing but your taste outgrowing your practice. Had you been born a Peer's daughter, and lived among literary men, and seen things to exercise your powers of observation, the world would ere this have been admiring the sagacious humour of your remarks and the graceful vigour of your descriptions. As it is, you have only to begin and go on: time will make all possible, all easy. Why did you give up that Essay on Friendship? *For my sake*, resume it and finish it! Never mind how bad, how execrable it may seem, go thro' with it. The next will be better, and the next, and the next; you will approach at each trial nearer the Perfection which no one ever reached. If I knew you fairly on the way, I should feel quite easy: your reading is going on as it ought; there wants only that you should write also. Begin this Essay again, if you love me!

Goethe lies waiting for your arrival. You make a right distinction about Goethe: he is a great genius and *does not make you cry*. His feelings are various as the hues of Earth and Sky, but his intellect is the Sun which illuminates and overrules them all. He does not yield himself to his emotions, but uses them rather as things for his judgement to scrutinize and apply to purpose. I think Goethe the only living model of a great writer. The Germans say there have been *three* geniuses in the world since it began — Homer, Shakespear and Goethe! This

of course is shooting on the wing: but after all abatements, their countryman is a glorious fellow. It is one of my finest day-dreams to see him ere I die.

As you are fond of tears, I have sent you a fresh supply of Schiller. His *Kabale und Liebe!* [Intrigue and Love] will make you cry your fill. That Ferdinand with his *Du, Louise, und ich und die Liebe!*[1] [Thou, Louise, and I and Love!] is a fine youth; I liked him well — tho' his age is some five years less than mine. You will also read Schiller's *Life;* it is written by a sensible and well-informed but very dull man. I forget his name[2] — but Schiller once lived in his house, — near Leipzig, I think.

That miserable farrago of mine on the same subject goes on as ill as any thing can go. I have been thrice on the point of burning it, and giving up the task in despair. Interruption upon interruption, so that I have scarcely an hour in the day at my disposal; and dulness thickening round me till all is black as Egypt where the darkness might be felt! There is nothing for it but the old song Patience! Patience! I *will* finish it. — By the way, I wish you would think of the most striking passages you can recollect of in *Karlos*, *Wallenstein*, *Tell*, &c: I design to give extracts and translations. Have them at your finger ends when you *come*.

Alas! Alas! this *coming* is a weary business: but I were a Goth to accuse *you*, for I see you have my contentment honestly at heart. Well, I will wait; and the time will come when I shall be repaid

[1] Act iii. sc. 4.

[2] Körner, father of Theodor Körner, the young patriot poet who fell in the War of Liberation in 1813.

for it. One thing only I am afraid of: that these Bullers may carry me away from Edinburgh before your time! They speak of setting out for the country early in May — sometimes on the first day of it. I was quite enraged at them last week: they talked of living thro' the Summer at North Berwick,[1] and I kept dreaming day and night about seeing you perpetually, and being happy by your side; — till behold! it turned out that North Berwick would not do, and we must away to Dunkeld or some undiscovered spot among the Grampians! These are hard things for flesh and blood: but better days are coming. Blessed *future!* one always turns to it. I have yet seen little of you — but enough to make me pray that I may never lose sight of you, while I live in this world — or any other. — I am always

Your friend and brother,

TH: CARLYLE.

You must write immediately. I am in an immense hurry, and as usual have concluded at mid-way. Byron has sent us a new Poem, the *Age of Bronze:* it is short, and pithy — but not at all poetical. Byron may still easily fail to be a great man. You shall see his *Bronze* (a political squib) when you arrive; and another *Liberal* which is on the way. Come speedily, — lose no moment you can help losing. I know you will, being in the benignant aspect at present, — which is your natural one, makes all the world love you, and if my prayers be heard, will last forever. Adieu my dear Friend! Be diligent and *come!* [*On the wrapper:*] Alas!

[1] On the Forth, some ten or eleven miles from Haddington.

the *Kabale und Liebe* is not here: you must content yourself with the *Robbers* and the *Life* for this time. I will send the other instantly, if you require it.

Letter 50

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh Haddington

3, Moray Street, Monday, '14th April, 1823.'

My dear Jane, — Thinking that you might have finished all that was new or interesting to you in the first volume of Schiller, I have ventured to send you the second. I also wanted to speak with you: and "man is a selfish being," as my Shoemaker at Ecclefechan positively assured me last Summer.

My speech at present however must be very brief; for tho' longing greatly to talk with you, I have nothing worth a pin to say. I am quite sick at heart about this journey of yours. We are to depart for Dunkeld or Killiecrankie or I know not whither, in the first week of May; and already after tomorrow, I shall be confined constantly, except between one and four o'clock. It is ever thus! — I believe I shall have to travel without seeing you at all. I could "roar" like Bottom, when I think of this, "so that it should do any one's heart good to hear me."[1] I am seriously vexed. But do you never mind me. Come — if woman's wit and good-nature can show you the means; if not, be diligent and happy — *und lass mich fahren* [and let me shift for myself]. You would be always dear to me, tho' I should never see you more. — But this is poor tragedy, and so I leave it.

[1] "Midsummer-night's Dream," Act i. sc. 2.

Are you going steadily on with Gibbon? I hope you will stick by his skirts, in spite of all the roughness of the path, till he bring you to the end. There is much instruction in him, and much entertainment also — tho' one tires in so long a march. The volume which treats of Mahomet is a splendid piece of writing. *Never look at the notes*, if you can help it; they are often quite abominable.

You must translate *Egmont*, during Summer, *in proper style:* we will print it, if we please! You must also write to me — almost every day — like a dutiful Scholar, as you always were. I am quite sorry — and could almost laugh at my sorrow, it is so absurd — for what I call this *parting*. As if sixty miles could part us more effectually than sixteen!

In the mean time, do come hither — unless it is expressly written to the contrary upon the "Iron Leaf." Without delay! — I have to hear you read *Egmont;* and to say nine hundred and ninety nine things, and hear as many; and the time is short, very short. Do come my dear Jane — if it be possible. Will you insert a "not" here as you once wickedly did, and send it me for an answer? I do not think so.

Schiller swells on my hands; it will require to be divided into parts: I meditate *three*. The first will be ready against your arrival, whenever that happens. I intend to have it done in two days. It is worse and worse; but never mind!

I read Spenser these some mornings, while eating my breakfast. He is a dainty little fellow, as ever you saw: I propose that you and he shall be closely acquainted by and by. What think you of this description of sunrise:

"At last the golden orientall gate
Of greatest heaven gan to open fair;
And Phœbus fresh, as bridegroom to his mate,
Came dauncing forth, shaking his dewy haire;
And hurls his glistring beams thro' gloomy aire." [1]

His *Faery Queene* is like the sand of Pactolus,[2] gold dust sparkles in every foot of it. — But I can palaver no more: for my time and paper are done. Will you not *come?* or at least write to me immediately? I am wearied with waiting — but patient — and — ever yours.

T. Carlyle.

Letter 51

Miss Welsh to T. Carlyle, Edinburgh

Haddington, '16th April, 1823.'

My dear Friend, — You are entitled to double thanks this time. Your little Note was a most agreeable surprise. I have been wishing to write every day for a week past, and have always delayed till the next, in the hope of having something positive to say respecting our Will o' the wisp visit. But my patience will hold out no longer; and so I write again without being able to give or get any satisfaction on the subject. The gowns are made, the weather is fine, and there is nothing under the sun to detain us here that I can imagine; and still my Mother does not fix. The only symptom I can discover of our departure being near at hand, is the terrible hubbub that is going on in the house, and which I have observed is always a

[1] "Faery Queene," Bk. i. canto v.
[2] A river of Lydia, famed for its golden sands.

prelude to our leaving home. We have as much noise and bustle and as many workmen employed — about nothing — as if we were preparing against a siege. These "reddings up"[1] are fearful affairs; and to my unhousewife perceptions they produce no other effects than confusion, discomfort and dirt. — But no matter.

So we are to have no reading of German this Summer after all. It is all one where we go now — as far as you are concerned. My Mother will not make out her visit to Dumfriesshire till after the beginning of May; and till then my time in Town will not be at my own disposal. Well, it is very, very provoking; but fretting will not mend the matter.

This fine weather is very unfavourable to my studies: people come in, and I am forced out at all hours of the day; there is nothing for it but to rise earlier. By the help of the Lord I got over my bed at seven, — twice during the last week. I am busy with Gibbon, my adorable *Life of Necker* (not yours),[2] and Tieck. Either Schiller's prose is much more difficult than his verse, or my head is much thicker than it was in Winter. I hope it is not putting you to inconvenience my detaining these books so long. If you want them, tell me instantly. "Speaking of swine,"[3] a very ludicrous and rather annoying circumstance occurred to me the other day. You must have it, for I think it will make you laugh.

[1] House-cleanings, which Mrs. Carlyle in later years used to call "domestic earthquakes."

[2] Carlyle had written a short "Life of Necker" for Brewster's Encyclopædia.

[3] Scottish, especially East Lothian, phrase, meaning "in this connection," or "by the bye."

I was in the drawing-room alone, fretting over the *Robbers*, when the door opened, and Betty announced a stranger gentleman. A young man of fair complexion, dressed in a green surtout, stepped forward. I rose, bowed, blushed, and looked foolish as people do on such occasions, and stood a few seconds in expectation that he would relieve my bashfulness by pronouncing his name or business; but he did not seem inclined to break the ice, nor was I inclined to stand and be stared at; and so I motioned to him to take a seat, and resumed my own. After some minutes of perplexing silence, my ears were startled by a volley of my beloved German; but the stranger gentleman spoke so fast I could not catch his meaning; and my dilemma was extreme. At last he asked in English, if I was not Miss Welsh, and if I did not understand his language. Being satisfied on these points, he drew a book from his pocket, and said with an undaunted smile, "You are rich Lady! I am poor. I have far to travel, and am very poor indeed: buy this book of me, give me six and sixpence for this book!" What a *dénouement* to my conjectures! how prosaic! I was mortified beyond measure: it had not once entered my head [that] the stranger gentleman was a beggar. However I gave him half a crown, *as he begged in German;* but declined buying his book (a sort of vocabulary) which could be of no use to me. He seemed well enough satisfied, but did not, like a Scotch beggar, immediately march off with his booty. He talked on for a whole hour and a half. There was so much of the gentleman in his appearance, that I felt a delicacy in desiring him to go away: and besides, his conversation was so animated, it discovered such a curious mixture of

talent and meanness, levity and sentiment, that I did not find his company tiresome. Among other passages of his history he told me of an affair he had in France with a young girl who was Beauty's self, and Goodness's self, and who was *friend of his heart* and dearer to him than all his mundane friends together. She was an orphan and her guardian was a knave and embezzled her little fortune (very *little*, I have no doubt). The poor injured girl wept to him (to the stranger gentleman), and what cannot a beautiful woman effect by her tears? A woman that loves? The tears cost her guardian — here he made a long and fearful pause — "what?" I asked with some impatience; for though I did not half believe his little orderly romance I was interested in its catastrophe — "what did they cost him?" — "His life Lady!" — "I told him to restore, or by mine soul and honour and by the powers of the living *Gott*, before the next sun went down, he should be *kalt*, *kalt* as ice. I told him if there was any man in his human body, to meet me in the Champ de Mars and give me vengeance! He came Lady! *pal* as this (touching his shirt collar), but I left him *paller!*" — "You killed him then?" — "Ay Lady! killed him through here" (pointing to his body). "And you feel no remorse?" — "Ah *Mädchen*, my soul is dark as the middle of night. Had I one little glimmer of hope to guide me back to France! *Ah! Espérance! Espérance!* but I have no hope, no friend. Amalia, mine Amalia, is dead! *Keine Hoffnung*, *keine Freunde mehr!* [No hope, no friends more!]" — from time to time he relieved the *cunningly devised* cruelties of his fate, with the most humorous satire on the English; — speaking of

their passion for *cursching* (cursing), he said it was quite proverbial on the Continent. When a John Bull appears on the streets of Paris, the French say to each other: "*le voilà! un Gott-damn!*" Ah, it is a *cursching* nation!

At last some other visitors came in, and my German was constrained to take himself off. On the evening of the following day, a parcel (*paid*) was brought me from Dunbar, which to my great surprise contained the stranger gentleman's vocabulary and a Letter which I will transcribe for your edification. [*Here follows a copy of the Letter, which was in German.*]

Mein Gott! what a strange stranger gentleman! I did not know what to do. The "*Antwort*" was out of the question. I could not bring myself to write a friendly Letter to a beggar, however *rich* he might be *in soul*. To return his confounded book was the next thing; but then the carriage of it would have cost him more than a beggar might have found it convenient to pay; and according to the coach regulations, I could not prepay it further than Dunbar. I then thought of sending him the price of it in a blank cover; but that would have subjected me either to insult a fool or be duped by a knave. I did not know what to do; and so I did nothing at all. But the stranger gentleman had no notion of letting me off so easily: two days ago I received another epistle from Newcastle (he is getting on) complaining of my cruel silence, wondering if I had not received his parcel, or if I could not read his German, and praying me to relieve his anxiety by the very next post. The most of this Letter was written in queer English; but the concluding sentence in which lay the cream of the jest,

was in German. It ran thus (as I translated it): "Best, loveliest, dearest of all women I ever saw! would that fate had designed thee for my Bride!" (a modest speculation for a German beggar!) "Is then Gold the only Heavenly Gift that confers happiness? or is it not rather Love?" "Dear Lady, be not offended with my German liberty: it is the practice of our Nation to speak the *heart's* meaning rather than the *head's*."

Well, they are a wonderful people these Germans! — Dr. Fyffe has an Uncle a Baron at Vienna, and I am sure he would have no objections to take me to him. I do think I will consider of it. — But *the* German. Now what do you think I wrote — for I did write? Consider my romance, my admiration for the language and sentiment of his Fatherland; consider also that "a woman (at least so Goethe says) hates no one that courts her favour;"[1] and then guess what I wrote! — his address on the back of his own Letter: and there the affair rests *for the present.* — Are you very tired?

I have written no Essay on Friendship or Essay on anything, and nevertheless I love you sufficiently. I am a very shuttlecock of a creature. I have no stamina; — but I will not plague you with my wants and faults and follies, just now. I have something more worth while to tell: since I began to write, my Mother has said something of going to Town on Friday or Saturday. God grant it may be so; for I am sick to death of these putting-offs. I will send you word as soon as I arrive; but I expect to hear from

[1] This observation was current before Goethe's time. "No woman ever hates a man for being in love with her; but many a woman hates a man for being a friend to her." — Pope, "Thoughts on Various Subjects."

you before then. Write tomorrow or next day. — What am I to do in Edinburgh all the time my Mother is in Dumfriesshire? I have some mind to go with her after all; but I won't; for they don't like me there. I will take lessons from some Painter; and read Italian, and leave the German till some other opportunity. — What a monstrous lubberly Letter! My love to your "Amplification."

Your affectionate Friend,

JANE BAILLIE PENELOPE WELSH.

LETTER 52

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

3, MORAY STREET, '17th April, 1823.'

MY DEAR JANE,— I have not been so glad this month as when Dr. Fyffe poked in his little farthing-face yesterday, with such a look of glad intelligence: I knew he brought me tidings from the East. The Doctor absolutely seemed to me one of the prettiest dapper little gentlemen I had ever set eyes on — the Letter was so large, and he handed it in with such a grace. You cannot think how the Devil had been tempting me about you for the four preceding days: I imagined — But now we have no time for that.

It is but half an instant since I finished this wretched bundle of papers,[1] at the sight of which you are turned so *pall:* "they will yet make you *paller*" — count on that. You must read them all over with the eye not of a friend, but of a *critic:* I must have your voice and decision and advice about twenty things before they go away. Besides I want

[1] Part I. of the "Life of Schiller."

to secure at least *three* readers — you, myself, and the Printer's devil: more I can do without. The thing is absolutely execrable: I have written as if I had been steeped in Lethe to the chin. "My soul is black as the middle of night Lady" — or rather gray and heavy as the middle of a Liddesdale mist. But never mind: tear the ugly thing to pieces, and give me your *severe and solid criticism* and counsel, when you arrive.

So you *are* to be here on Saturday! Heaven be thanked for it — I shall see my own Jane yet after all! Do contrive some reading of German or something that will bring us to meet together daily,— do, if it lies within the compass of your utmost ingenuity. You are a good creature and full of wiles: do exert them for me! We are not to leave Town till about the 20th of May after all; I am still free between one o'clock and seven every day: I expect all things from your kindness and never-failing "devices."

Here is an ass come in from Glasgow and I must leave you. May the Devil comfort him — in his own good time: I had still half an hour to spend with you.

You will let me know the first convenient moment after you arrive. Write to me at anyrate, if you cannot see me on Saturday: I shall be very fretful else. Adieu my dearest Jane! God bless you always!

I am ever yours,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

Excuse this haste and nonsense: I have not been so spurred for a twelve-month. There is no hurry in nature with the Books.

What a *preux chevalier* your *Teutscher* was!

Letter 53

Miss Welsh to T. Carlyle, Moray Street, Edinburgh

22, George Square, Edinburgh,
Wednesday, '30 April, 1823.'

[By Post-mark]

My dear Friend,— I am sorry you made so sure of us on Saturday. We do not always ride when we put on our spurs. We only got here last night. — Come tomorrow in the early part of the day, or after tea: we might miss you in the forenoon. Be very "*reasonable*" for a little while: when my Mother goes to Dumfriesshire, I will see you as often as you please.

Yours affectionately,
Jane B. Welsh

Letter 54

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, 22, George Square, Edinburgh

3, Moray Street, Saturday, '3 May, 1823.'

My dear Friend, — I am to be in your side of the Town tomorrow morning; so I may as well leave you this. According to the sage proverb, if it do no good, it will do no harm.

I received your kind Letter[1] about two hours ago: it was "like water to a thirsty soul." I do almost believe that you *are* some Good Angel sent

[1] This Letter has been lost.

into this world for my especial solace, no less than for the many great and beneficial purposes which you are yet destined to accomplish. Never did a Letter come more opportunely: I had been maintaining a stout battle against the Fiend, all day since five in the morning. From you I was separated; and Brother Jonathan,[1] the only other soul of these parts that truly cared for me, was then as I calculated sitting down to tea with his Mother at Mainhill. It seemed hard to be left alone, even in this most "inteilectual" of cities — among the 149,000 hearts that beat within the bosoms of its indwellers, not one beating with a faithful pulse for me, the great important me! It is true, Mistress Wilkie's cat is in exactly a similar case, and complains not a syllable; but the cat is much more a Philosopher than I. It did seem very hard. I must either have written a longer and more stupid Letter to *you*, or have grown exceedingly sulky in fighting out the contest single-handed.

My dear Jane, you talk of "gratitude" — in a style which is worthy of you: but I know well that if we should part tonight forever, it is I that have been the chief gainer. Since the day when I first saw you, there has always been one sunny place in my thoughts, when often all the rest was dark and surly enough. The frank upright and kind manner in which you have uniformly treated me, I shall not easily forget, while I remember anything. It is one of my dearest hopes that I may live to thank you as I ought.

[1] John A. Carlyle (Dr. Carlyle). Carlyle's elder half-brother was also named John; and partly to distinguish between the two "Johns," and partly as a tribute to his loving and lovable nature, the younger John was familiarly called Jonathan.

But I must not wander, for you know all that already, and the night is waning. We have business to discuss. I have almost decided about these Translations: and how, think you? That you must not meddle with them. — In the first place there is your Mother's will, which we should consider and respect, if merely because it is hers; and this has already determined against us. But independently of any such determination, the task seems to me unworthy of you. To translate *Elizabeth* is an enterprise which, in Samuel Johnson's words, many men, many women and many children could effect; from which therefore you could reap no credit; to which you could not even put your name. And what is worse than all, worse at least to me, there is something intolerable in the idea that *my* noble Jane should officiate even in appearance as a kind of subaltern to the hacks of Oliver & Boyd, should send forth the first fruits of her pen (yet by God's blessing to be known over all the land) under the wing of any small prefacing Editor — a creature of paragraphs and shreds, a maker of *Scrap-books* — a mere *thing*. I declare I cannot abide this: if there were no other reason, I would almost vote against the undertaking upon that ground alone.

On the other hand, doubtless, I cannot but admit the sound sense of what you say about *employment:* but I think we shall be able to provide more suitably for that want, by other means. There is *Meister*, for instance, which I long much to consult you fully upon: if the project take effect, I count on your co-operation. Or perhaps it was a better thought which struck me today. You have heard of the Baroness de La Motte Fouqué,[1] a German Author-

[1] Karoline, second wife of Baron de la Motte Fouqué.

ess of many pretty Tales, one or two of which I have read and liked; there is Christian Wolf by Schiller, and possibly one or two similar Stories in Goethe: what would you think of a Book appearing next Winter with the Title "Tales from the German, translated and selected by Jane Baillie Welsh?" A beautiful foolscap Octavo — with Prefaces, &c, &c, by your illustrious Pedagogue — ushering you, with his cap in hand and in his gracefullest mood, into the great drawing-room of Literature, and standing between you and the brunt of all criticisms whatsoever! Is not this worth fifty such schemes as the other? If you think so, I will go on Tuesday, and enquire about this Motte Fouqué, and send to London for her book if it is not here — immediately. Never fear that you shall want work: if this plan do not do, we shall devise a hundred better, *whenever* we have room to speak and act with freedom. O! that you *were* at liberty: at present it is really tormenting. But there is a time coming, let us never fret. I know not what I would give for leave to speak with you unmolested for the space of one solar day. I believe I shall grow quite *demented*, — if I part from you thus. But we will not. Espérance! Espérance! We *shall* meet at last, and be the kinder to each other for the vexation. Meanwhile never mind me and my conveniences: write to me — one of your own little Letters — whenever you cannot see me: and be a *good bairn*, merry and cheerful; I shall be as patient as a Stoic. On Monday-night I see you, if possible: let me know in the forenoon, if you do not like my decision, and it shall be as you would have it. At present I am half-sleeping and tired as need be, and dull — but not dull enough to hate you *altogether*, tho' I con-

fess you *are* a very hateful character, if I were not prejudiced. There is no end to this monster Prejudice. The Socinian Ministers say it is going to be the ruin of the nation at last; and sure enough, it has inveigled me into your witcheries, and Heaven knows what a dance it will lead me there. After all you must be a very wicked person — but I cannot help loving you — so there it rests.

Goodnight, my dear Jane! — I am ever yours,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

LETTER 55

Miss Welsh to T. Carlyle, Edinburgh

22, GEORGE SQUARE, '10 May, 1823.'
[By post-mark]

MY DEAR FRIEND, — Here is a fine consummation to all our schemes! You will come here today and find me gone. Muster all your philosophy, for I can spare you none of mine. They are driving me distracted among them: my Mother all at once got it into her head that I must accompany her to Dumfriesshire, that her visit might not be so short as she would have to make it if I remained here. Besides my wish to remain near you for a few days longer, I have other reasons for disliking this project with all my heart: my relations there have treated me with little kindness. I have felt this more than I care to confess — not on my own account; for I am no-ways dependent on them; but to see them so soon forget all the benefits my adored Father has conferred on them, and all the honour his character has bequeathed to their name,

— is heartbreaking. However so it must be that I go. I opposed the proposal manfully for two days; at last my Mother's extreme displeasure forced me to yield. It was determined finally only yesterday. I meant to meet you this morning, but my Mother invited a gentleman here to an early breakfast, and desired me to get all my packing over before he came, which kept me busy enough.

If I had only known you was so near the house, I would have insisted on seeing you; for I was up at the time. And so I must go without a word. We set out in a few minutes for a Cousin's house about four miles from Town,[1] where we may remain perhaps a week; from there we pass straight through to Dumfriesshire. It is impossible to say how much I am vexed. A thousand things are harassing my mind at this present moment: my Mother's unkindness is not the least of it. She is resenting my disinclination to go with her as much as she could have done my refusal. I am very unhappy. I wish to God I could fall asleep for a twelvemonth. I dread how this year may end. But "I am full of devices" — you have told me that so often that I begin to believe it. Well, I shall need all my ingenuity to bring me safe to port.

Do write to me immediately; address to me at Mr. Binnie's, West Craigs, by Corstorphine. I wish you may be able to read a word that I have written, — with hurry and vexation together, I can scarcely hold my pen.

Your affectionate friend at all times and everywhere,

JANE BAILLIE WELSH.

[1] Mr. Binnie, at Corstorphine.

I shall carry the German books with me: the others will be left for you here. You can call for them as soon as you like.

Letter 56

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Mr. Binnie's, West Craigs, Corstorphine

3, Moray Street, Sunday morning,
'11th May, 1823.'

My dear Jane, — If I wanted to preach on the emptiness of human hopes, the history of yesterday might afford the best of commentaries on that most stale of texts. How differently the sun rose and set upon me; what I looked for at six in the morning, what I found at six in the evening! But it boots not to murmur: let us submit quietly to what cannot be avoided, and dwell rather on the bright side than the dark, both of what is past and coming. This visit of yours has been sadly marred; yet I have much to be thankful for. I dreamed of it pleasantly for three months; I saw you four times; we had an hour to ourselves, and such an hour — is worth months of life as it usually passes. We are parted now, vexatiously enough; but we shall meet again ere long, under happier stars; and I still keep looking forward to a glorious time, when we shall feel independent of other people's arrangements and be to one another all that Nature meant us to be. Never mind it, my dear Jane: what are a few days, when one has a life to lead, and knows how to lead it? Cast away your anger, clear up your countenance, and accompany your Mother

with a cheerful heart. She *should* have let you stay; but guard yourself from believing that she did not mean it kindly towards you. Who knows what anxieties she entertained respecting you, what benefits she thought might follow to you from this journey? If you consider her conduct as capricious, it becomes *you* to pardon what yourself would have been above committing, and always to love and honour her, who can never cease to love you but with her life. I pay no compliments to your Mother, beyond what any Mother merits, when I remind you that no human being can ever have your interest more truly at heart than she has. Do not quarrel with her, therefore; go to the South since she requires it, and blithely because it is but acquitting yourself of a debt to make her happy.

For your Nithsdale friends, you do well not to heed them. Thank God! you are nowise dependent on them for protection or patronage, or anything but kindnesses — which you can requite richly if offered, and dispense with easily if withheld. There are hearts now beating in the world that would be blessed in doing for you what nature and gratitude called on *them* to do. If the call has been neglected, conceive yourself to be elevated far above the influence of such poor proceedings, and your contempt will gradually change into pitying toleration. Do not vex yourself with their selfishness and shallowness; enjoy the grain of goodness and real affection which you will find in every one of them, and look upon their accompanying alloy as the concern of those who feel so meanly, not of you.

I know but dimly what difficulties you have to dread from the present twelvemonth. It is easy indeed to see that you have always much to strive

with. I hope I should feel an admiring sympathy with one so situated, tho' she were nothing in particular to me. It is as if an eaglet were condemned to mix with creatures of a lower wing, and to be ruled over by them for a time. But it is only for a time! I commit you to the guidance of your own clear understanding, and noble heart; and I feel no fear that you will fail in the trial. Nor will it seem presumptuous if I put forth my humble claim to share in *all* that distresses you. God knows I have little power to help with counsel or otherwise; but Jane does not doubt that I am true to her from the very bottom of my heart, and it is always something, when one suffers, to know that another suffers with us and on our account. Trust me, my own dear Jane! I have examined myself, and I tell you I am not all made of clay. The world holds nothing in it, for whose fate I am more anxious than yours. I *have* this merit, if scarcely any other.

But wherefore am I drawling it in this elegiac strain? Mercy! you would think the one of us was dead or wedded or under sentence of perpetual exile. Are we not alive and loving one another? Are we not free agents, with right and reason on the side of will? What then are we afraid of? There is nothing that can frighten us; no might or dominion upon Earth or below it (those Above are *with* us) that can take from ourselves the direction of our destiny. We will both of us *do as we please*, in spite of all that can be said or sung to the contrary; and both of us, if it so please God, be happy and dignified in our day and generation. Fear nothing, my best and dearest Jane; this year will pass as others have done, only with more fruit of your exertions; and everything will be as we would

have it, in the end. What have *we* to dread, *seit wir uns rund umschlungen, fest und ewig!* [since we have clasped each other firmly and forever!][1] Are we not "two originals in our own humble way"? And who the Devil shall prevent us from "aiding and abetting" each other in all lawful purposes, and bringing them all to a fortunate conclusion? No man or thing shall prevent us. Fear nothing!

I have not told you the half of my disappointment, or you would admire my philosophy. The Bullers are to set off on Thursday, and they had given me the subsequent week to spend here as I thought proper. I calculated on spending some sixteen hours per day of it beside you. — All gone now! — and nothing left but what is doubly hateful to me! I have determined to forsake this wretched place, which wanting you, has little in it that I care to waste good hours upon: I set off for Mainhill about Wednesday morning. Tomorrow I shall order the Book of *Volksmährchen* for you: it is going to answer rarely; the tales seem very good, they will employ all your gracefulness and humour of style to translate them properly. I will read them first, and then send them down to you; out of five volumes of good stories, we shall certainly succeed in gathering one of excellent. Meantime go on with Egmont and Faust and Gibbon. You will have a busy and pleasant Summer; I must hear of you *weekly* at the seldomest; if you forget me, you are but a dead woman. *Sie wissen wohl dass Lafontaine sagt* (or might have said) *gross ist die Macht eines Mannes im* SCOLDEN *und* SULKEN *und* RÄSUPADUSTEN! [You

[1] *Cf.* "Wir habens uns gefunden, halten uns
Umschlungen, fest und ewig."
"Wallenstein" (*Die Piccolomini*), Act iii. sc. 5.

know well that Lafontaine says (or might have said) great is the power of a man in scolding and sulking and raising up a dust!] So think of it my bonny Bairn, or it will be worse for you. I too am to be very busy. I purpose finishing *Schiller* and translating *Meister* in spite of all its drawbacks. *Meister* will introduce us to its Author; for you must know that you and I are to go and live six months at Weimar, and learn philosophy and poetry from the great von Goethe himself: I settled it all the other night, so there is nothing further to be said upon the subject. I intend like my old friend Joseph Buonaparte "*to oblige you to go voluntarily*"!

But I must quit this trifling, for the paper is done, and we have to — part! I wish to hear from you the very moment you receive this. If on surveying the ground, you judge that it would not prejudice the "commonwealth," I should propose to walk out to Corstorphine on Tuesday evening, and see you once again. Five minutes spent near you, in talking of our own concerns in our own way, would amply recompense me for all the toil. Even a stiff and formal interview before unconcerned spectators is not without its value. I leave you to decide entirely. If you think it will not answer, say so; if otherwise, it shall go hard but I will make it out in spite of all arrangements. Write to me any way: and if within eight days you have a moment's time, write also to Mainhill, and tell me how I must direct to you from the North.[1] You will have entered my native County before I leave it: I shall climb Burnswark at sunset, and see its red light shining on your dwelling-place, and think prayers for your welfare.

[1] That is, from Kinnaird (near Dunkeld in Perthshire) where the Bullers had decided to spend the summer.

God bless you my dear Jane! and keep all evil far from you! Shall we not meet again? Forget me not, my Dearest! Farewell and love me!

I am yours forever and ever,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

LETTER 57

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Mr. Binnie's, West Craigs, Corstorphine

2, MORAY STREET,[1] Monday, 11 P. M.
'12 May, 1823.'

ALAS! Alas! my dear Jane, I cannot see you on Tuesday, as I partly hoped to do. The coach does not run my way on Wednesday: I must set off to-morrow morning, or be quite belated; and before you read this, I am many a weary mile away. Sad work! but it will not last forever; that is my consolation.

If your Letter does *not* contain a refusal, I shall curse my stars. It will lie here for eight days, then I shall see.

[1] This is Carlyle's last Letter to Miss Welsh from 3, Moray Street (now called Spey Street), Leith Walk. When he finally left Kinnaird (7th February, 1824) and came to Edinburgh to superintend the printing of "Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship," he found his old Lodgings at No. 3, let, and took up his abode in the adjoining house, No. 1. Here he staid till the 25th of March, when he went home to Mainhill. — Carlyle's Letter printed by Mr. Froude, "Life," i. 210–11, is there misdated: in the original it is plainly, "3, Moray Street, 2nd April, 1823." Mr. Froude has changed 1823 to 1824, and then altered Carlyle's age, given in words in the body of the Letter, from twenty-seven to twenty-eight. Carlyle did not lodge at 3, Moray Street during any part of 1824.

Will you not write to me at Mainhill? I know you will, if you can command one moment's leisure. I shall begin to ask at the Post-office there on Friday first: if you cannot help it, never mind my disappointment. Only I must know your address in Nithsdale, and all your movements, or I shall be very unhappy, and at a loss how to proceed. So you had better write to me if it were only a line.

And now my best and kindest of friends, farewell for a short season! Amid all my wanderings the proudest thought of my heart will be that you thought me worthy of your sympathy; my dearest hope will be in its continuance. God keep you, my own Jane! I trust we were born for one another's good, not evil. Write to me about everything you do and suffer and enjoy. Never forget me utterly. For myself, I cannot lose the remembrance of *you*, but with the last pulse of my existence. Farewell, my beloved Jane!

I am ever, ever,
Your most affectionate friend,
THOMAS CARLYLE.

Write to me, and you shall hear the moment I arrive at Dunkeld. Be sure to write! One line is infinitely better than none. — I am hurried to death — and tired — I have done the work of twenty men today, and it is scarcely finished yet. Good night! and peace be with you always!

Letter 58

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, c/o Walter Welsh, Templand.

Kinnaird House,[1] 25th May, 1823.

My dear Friend, — Your punctuality towards me required a better recompense than this apparent negligence. I galloped down to Ecclefechan on the day appointed, amid storms and wind and rain; I found your Letter[2] waiting for me, like a diamond among the rubbish of the place, and returned home to read it, careless of the tempest, and more quickly than I had come. Since Thursday, if you have thought of me at all, it must have been with something of irritation at my sloth: but you would lay aside that feeling if you knew the bustle and confusion in which I have passed my time. I scarcely exaggerate when I call this the very first quiet hour that has occurred in my history since you wrote.

[1] Kinnaird House, which the Buller family had at this time taken furnished, is situated in the Perthshire Highlands, about a mile below the junction of the rivers Tay and Tummel, a short distance from Killiecrankie Pass on the north, and the Town of Dunkeld on the south. The *old* Kinnaird House, in which Carlyle lodged and slept, is a very small, dreary, damp-looking place, and must have been at that date far from sanitary. In spite of diligent walking and riding, Carlyle's health grew worse the longer he staid at Kinnaird; perhaps, however, his excessive labour was the chief cause of this, for besides his Tutorial duties he was carrying forward two difficult literary tasks simultaneously, — translating "Wilhelm Meister" and completing his "Life of Schiller." Carlyle remained here, with two short breaks, from May, 1823, till February, 1824.

[2] This Letter has been lost.

Now that I am settled, I shall be as regular as ever. Our correspondence has always been delightful to me; and I now begin to augur from it even more enjoyment than before. Let me beg of you to second my endeavours to make the most of it, while the Fates allow it to continue. It seems to depend upon ourselves whether we shall be as happy as two persons need be.

I spent a joyful week in Annandale, amid scenes in themselves unattractive or repulsive, but hallowed in my thoughts by the rude but genuine worth and true affection of those who people them. I know not how it was that I so confidently anticipated seeing you on my return either at Edinburgh or Corstorphine. Perhaps I reckoned on the irregularity of your movements, and imagined that the chapter of chances would for once turn up in my favour. But it did not: on Thursday morning, these delusions were dispelled. The coach had just reached Workman's door in Moffat, and I was sitting calmly on my place, reposing after a hard ride on horseback of nearly 20 miles, when a voice below pronounced my name in a tone of gladness; and whose should the voice be but your little Doctorkin's! It was Fyffe himself travelling like a weaver's shuttle from Edinburgh and back to it: he took his place beside me on the roof, and we journeyed together. "Miss Welsh, Sir," said he, "arrived at her Grandfather's the night before last." This joyful intelligence was given with an air of knowingness and self-sufficiency which I relished very little. The topic of "Miss Welsh" I studied to avoid for the rest of the day. This Fyffie is a jewel of a creature; made of the kindliest clay, feels good will towards many persons, ill will towards none;

and his little spirit mounts and swells and whirls about with all the briskness of the freshest can of penny-beer. I cannot but admire the man, a little more would make me envy him. The lion is ruler of the forest, but the squirrel leads a merrier life: one had sometimes rather be the squirrel. I shall always entertain a species of affection for your Doctor: he is of the *genus* cricket, and I like all crickets.

There was nothing but toil and chagrin for me in Edinburgh; so I staid there only a few hours, and last night I arrived here. Of course I can yet say nothing definite about those mighty enterprises in which you and I are to be engaged throughout the Summer; only, in general terms, that I still augur well of their success. *Musäus* was not come to Edinburgh when I passed; but I look for it here shortly: when I have perused two volumes of it, you will find them at Haddington, with my remarks, and then you must begin the work of translating with might and main. In the mean time, I hope you are busy with Faust and Egmont, and already recovered from the fatigues and vexations of the North. Be careful, scrupulously careful about your health; keep yourself constantly employed in the same noble occupations which have hitherto formed the great business of your life; *never forget your worshipful Tutor;* and no evil shall betide you. I often feel assured that we shall yet join hands in perfect happiness: God grant the time were soon to come, and never to pass away!

For my own part, I think I am going to be comfortable enough in my new quarters. The Bullers are good people, and what is better, the first hour when they treat me uncivilly shall likewise be the last. So we live together in that easy style of cheer-

ful indifference, which seems to be the fit relation between us. For the rest, I have balmy air to breathe, fine scenery to look at, and stillness deeper than I have ever before enjoyed. My apartments are in a house detached from the larger building, which except at meals and times of business, I intend to frequent but seldom: my window opens into a smooth bowling-green, surrounded with goodly trees, and the thrushes have been singing among them, tho' it has rained every moment since I came. Here then I purpose to spend my hours of leisure, to labour hard, and think sweetly of friends that are far away. Here will Jane's Letters be perused as they arrive, and many foolish but delightful thoughts about her be entertained. These day-dreams are blessed things at times! And surely it is kind in Nature to give us these images of Heaven when she cannot give us Heaven itself. *Falso queritur de Natura;*[1] I protest people use the old Lady in the most unhandsome manner. If Herschell with his telescope can shew us the Ring of Saturn, shall we blame him because he does not bring us down a slice of it to carry home in our pockets? No! I will dream away, as I look at these beautiful valleys with their sides of rock and their bottoms of emerald verdure; dream of happiness that is not in store for me: the barren reality will come soon enough, but cannot rob me of the pleasure I enjoyed in disbelieving it.

But I must let you go for this time: my paper

[1] "Falso queritur de natura sua genus humanum, quod imbecilla atque ævi brevis forte potius, quam virtute regatur." ["Mankind complain of their nature unjustly, that being frail and of short duration, it is governed rather by chance than virtue."] — Sallust, "Jug." i.

and my time are done; and stupid and confused as I am what good were it tho' I had quires and days at my command? You must write me one of your longest Letters the very first hour you can spare after this reaches you. Tell me everything that you have done and suffered since we parted. Are we not *friends* and to continue so *forever?* You smile at my *forever*, and tell me of chance and change: but I will hope for better things. Both of us have a thousand faults; but we are both true-hearted people, both full of obstinacy: so let us trust in each other, and never fear the tricks of Fortune. I shall have no rest till I hear from you: write, therefore, write my kind Jane, as early as you can find a moment's leisure. It will be a pretty affair when I come down in August, if you have forgotten me! But you are the best of all the Maidens now alive, and would not do so uncivil a thing for the world. God bless you my own dear Jane! I am always, — Yours from the heart,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

The Address had almost been forgotten! Put: Kinnaird House, Dunkeld; and that will find me. — Tell your Mother that I have got a kind of copy of the old chaunt *Bridekirk's Hunting*[1] for her: it is not worth postage, but I will send it by the first parcel. — *Musäus* is arrived just now, and *Meister* and all of them! The former is in five pretty volumes; you shall hear of them ere long. Write soon, if possible. I am tired to death, and stupid as lead; next time I will do better, when I have gathered my wits again. Good night and joy be with you!

[1] See *post*, Letter 65.

Letter 59

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Templand

Kinnaird House, 11 June, 1823.

My dear Jane, — There must certainly be a spice of the sturdy Beggar in me, else I should not feel so impatient to get news of you. Never did woman write so faithfully to man as you have done to me; yet still my craving is unsatisfied, my cry is still: Give! Give! Yesterday at noon I was standing by the parlour-window, looking at these craggy mountains and the fleecy clouds, and wondering if Jane was well and happy, when the old grey Postman came pattering along the gravel on the outside of his nimble shelty,[1] bearing as usual his miscellaneous bag of tidings, his news of deaths and news of weddings, his matters spiritual and matters temporal, pieces of fine sentiment stuffed in beside bakers' and butchers' bills, and all his long tag-rag of etceteras; himself the while minding no jot about the whole of them, calculating only when the devil he *should* get to Aberfeldy thro' these cursed roads. I thought anxiously if peradventure he brought no packet out of Nithsdale? two minutes more resolved my query: the parti-coloured gentleman came smirking and scraping in with a large Letter[2] which I knew to be from you! I nearly overset the parti-coloured

[1] The curious phrase "on the *outside* of his nimble shelty" (Shetland pony), Carlyle doubtless derived from Butler:

> "But first, with nimble active force,
> He got on th' outside of his horse."
>
> "Hudibras," Part I. canto 7, ll. 405–6.

[2] This Letter has not been preserved.

gentleman, in my haste to reach my own apartment. Such a Letter was worth waiting thro' a twelvemonth for: since then, I have thought of nothing earthly else. You are kinder to me than I shall ever be able to repay. No! my own Jane, I never never shall forget you, but love you better and more dearly all the days of my existence. None ever more deserved it.

In my repeated studies of your Letter, no part of it escaped me: I need scarcely say with what attention I perused your clear and candid narrative of that disagreeable affair,[1] which has vexed you so much. I am more than proud that you thought it necessary to disclose it to me, and had the firmness to disclose it so plainly. Such conduct is like your true and guileless self: if we both follow that manner of proceeding constantly, suspicion will not find a place between us, to disturb the harmony of our affection: I honour you for what you have done, and hope I might in a similar case be able to imitate what I honour. The matter itself I have maturely considered; and far from blaming you, I but love you the more for what was meant so well, tho' it has turned out so oppositely. You have in fact been guilty of nothing, except it be a crime to despise all coquetry, and to feel for the pain you are giving to a heart that loves you. If your endeavours have failed, the fault rests not with you, or at worst consists but in a want of cold calculation, the error into which your frank and generous nature is ever aptest to hurry you, and which I should pity

[1] A "proposal of marriage" from a farmer's son near Thornhill. — See "Early Letters of Jane Welsh Carlyle," p. 15; "Letters and Memorials," ii. 392; also "New Letters and Memorials," ii. 220–5.

myself if I did not rather respect than censure. Cease then to regard this unlucky business as a cause of self-accusation: whatever becomes of it, you are innocent as even I could wish you; dearer to me than you were, because I see in it a new proof of that warmth of heart and fearless upright simplicity for which I have always loved you. You are my own noble Jane still, and will ever be so.

The past then, is right; the future may require more consideration. One thing is clear to me as the light of day, that you ought to explain the matter fully to the young man, without losing a moment. Whatever you may dread from the violence of his temper, the danger is increasing every moment that you leave him any hope, however slight; perhaps even the slighter the worse. Your own mind is irrevocably made up (*is* it not?); and this you are bound to let him know distinctly and at once whatever may betide. For your Friend, unfortunate as he is and apparently a very amiable man, I should be a savage if I did not feel deep sympathy: I see that your Letter must fall upon him like a thunderbolt and leave him crushed as if forever. But if managed rightly, the effect will not be what you fear. Much of the torment arising out of these disasters is in all cases derived from the injury done to the pride of the sufferer as well as to his affections. Of course in your mildest and kindest manner, you will strive to spare him all that needless pain. Admire him, praise him, be his Sister, anything but his Mistress. The latter, above all, let him see that it is not in the power of fate itself to make you. Thus cut off from every shadow of hope, the young man will be very wretched for a season: but he will at length have discovered truly

the ground he stands on, imagination will no longer have the power to tempt and irritate and dupe him; whatever force is in him will rally to his aid; if silly he will probably do his best to hate you; if a man of sense he will like you more reasonably than he did, but not a whit the less; any way you will soon be forever clear of his love, for love without some hope more or less is a plant rooted out from the soil where it grew, it withers in a single day. This young man is not like others, if the whole fortune of his life is set upon one single cast. He must have ambitions and wishes of many kinds, which this affection will not ruin. Point these out to him if you know them: they will assert their own claims tho' you do not. In six weeks, unless he is excessively idle, or has a mind far weaker or far stronger than any man I have ever met with, I prophesy that he will look upon the whole transaction with composure; in twelve months it will be faded into distance, — a chasm, the widest among the many which disfigure life's journey, but softened from its horrors by the space that intervenes, into a kind of melancholy beauty which it may always retain.[1] I know some men have done rash and terrible deeds in cases like this; but these men have had weak heads

[1] Carlyle is here speaking from experience. His so-called "First Love" affair with Margaret Gordon was not a serious matter, having been as it were "nipped in the very bud." For it is proved by Edward Irving's Letters to Carlyle that Margaret's affections were already engaged before she and Carlyle met. This was why she declined Carlyle's advances, and why she refused to continue a correspondence with him. Her conduct in the affair was honourable, open, and straightforward. There was therefore in Carlyle's case no thwarting of long-cherished hopes, no unfair play, and little or no cause for "hurt pride." — See Appendix B, Note Two.

and wild hearts, and almost always they have had foul play. This friend of yours is in none of these predicaments: if you explain to him the genuine motives of your conduct, he will see that it has been spotless as an Angel's; and without the feeblest expectation of any unnatural revenge to goad him on, he will have sense to perceive that "the last moment of his existence" is still at a considerable distance. God help him! poor fellow — I say it in truth and sincerity: he will be very miserable for a week or two, but that will be the worst of it.

On the whole, my dear Jane, I could wish that you had done with this vexatious business. I shall be on thorns till I hear what has become of it. If you like my advice, get it put in execution without delay, and tell me that the whole is over. I am indeed very impudent to set up for advising you in a concern which you know so much better how to manage of yourself: but I feel a deep anxiety about it, for many reasons which I need not state; and what one feels about one must be speaking of. I have already filled your sheet with it: no more of it *now!*

I am sorry that you find so little that is worthy of you in Dumfriesshire. Do not vex yourself, my dear kind-hearted Jane, about the shallow people of Penfillan.[1] Your Father's memory lives in a shrine more worthy of it than hearts like theirs. I never saw him that I might have honoured him; but his character they tell me is still to be traced in yours, as certainly his watchful care for the formation of your mind and his unwearied love are visible in their effects: cherish the thought of so noble and so dear a man; cherish it, my Jane, within the secret

[1] Her paternal grandfather's home.

cell of your own bosom, and heed not how vulgar mortals feel regarding it: if you ever think *me* worthy of the highest honour, you will let me unite with you in that most sacred of all your sentiments. My poor Jane! — But there is a life beyond this vale of tears, where souls that were made for love and for each other shall meet and never part any more.

I had many thousands of things to say, but I am got into a mood too solemn for talking of such matters. It is long past midnight; darkness and stillness are over the face of this world; the shadows of the other come hovering round one's mind. No more tonight! May good angels watch over your pillow, may the great Father of all forever bless you, my best, my bosom friend! *A Dieu!*

TH: CARLYLE.

THURSDAY MORNING, 12TH. — This is far too tragical a mode of writing, — it will never do. Next time I shall be as merry as any lark — as I ought to be, for I am happy here, at least happy when I talk to *you*. I am also a fool to write so soon; I might have had the *better word* of you for a week to come, now I must sit piping and pining reckoning how many days it will be till you shall please to give me another alms. But you will not be *very* long; that I know. Write to me all the sense or nonsense that is in your head, mind not what or how. I finished *Musäus* ten days ago: it is a nice little book and will do very well. You shall have it at Haddington whenever you get there, with multifarious advices and palavers. I am beginning *Meister*, but getting very slowly on. Next time I will tell you all. I have been sick and sleepless, otherwise

very happy; now I am recovering. You must ride *every day*. Be merry and love me. — God bless you.

Letter 60

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

Kinnard House, 1st July, 1823.

My dear Jane, — I am in a wonderful anxiety to hear from you, and have been for several days. By the almanack, it is just three weeks since I had my last Letter: by my imagination, it is half an age. If I knew certainly that you were still in Nithsdale, your patience would likely be assailed with a long Epistle from me: but it is one advantage of these jaunts (which you otherwise dislike so much) that your enemies cannot tell where to find you; that I the deadliest of them know not whether to point my soporific arrows against you to the South or to the South-east.[1] Good luck has delivered you for this time; but I warn you to be on your guard again. You promised to write to me *once a week* — No, you did not promise; but you are a kind angel of a creature, you will write to me whenever you can, and that is all I want. Give no heed to me when I become importunate.

Unable to accelerate the arrival of your Letter, I have bethought me of discharging a duty which I owe you, and procuring to myself at the same time the pleasure of an hour or two's conversation with you; a species of entertainment which, unless I attend to it better, will ere long have grown to be a

[1] *I. e.*, to Templand or to Haddington.

necessary of life. Then, if you take one of your frolics, and cut off my supplies, and I perish of want! But no! my own Jane will never forsake me; she is the friend of my soul forever and ever, she is *mine*, and I am hers, and we will love each other thro' all the changes of chance and time. "Brave words, Sir!" you observe: "but now to business." Well here it is.

Poor *Musäus* has been lying on the shelf these six weeks, longing to pay his dues to you. It was my earliest task to inspect his pretentions, and try whether he deserved that honour: I found him a very honest gentleman and admitted his claims without hesitation. Of genius in the strict meaning of the word his share is small if any; but in return he has a true vein of shrewd sense, no inconsiderable stock of knowledge, a fine, little, clear imagination, a perennial flow of good-nature, and abundance of wit and humour such as they are. His Tales are in general amusing: we shall be enabled to select some half dozen from them of quite superior quality. The *proper* half dozen I have been considering of, for some days, without yet having come to any very firm resolution. Perhaps in the present stage of the business it were best for you to begin translating *Libussa* (in the third volume) which I reckon about the best; and when you tire of writing, to peruse carefully the following: *Die Bücher der Chronika &c*, *Rolands Knappen*, *Legenden von Rübezahl*, *Der geraubte Schleyer*, and *Melechsala;* out of which when we meet, as I trust in Providence we shall soon do, it will be easy for us to lay our heads together and choose the fit quantity in the most prudent manner. No one of the Stories, even of those excluded in this enumera-

tion, is without passages of great merit; but generally these passages are more thinly disseminated, and the narrative languishes and wants incident and unity, in the Tales omitted here, particularly as you advance into the later volumes. On the whole however, I think we shall have no difficulty in making out a very handsome volume, if we play our parts fitly: at all events the undertaking will be very advantageous for you, whatever be the fortune of it; you will gain by it a complete acquaintance with German, and train yourself more and more in the art of writing English. I have often been surprised at the easy elegance with which you already compose; you want only practice of sufficient extent to make you a style of your own, and to give you the power of employing it with a felicity which there will be a thousand to envy for one there is to imitate. Some phrases and allusions in the original will here and there obstruct you; but do not linger over them; we will decipher them between us, or find means of blinking them in a plausible way. Take pains in your phraseology and punctuation; but not too much pains; there is a light good-natured strain of sarcasm in Musäus which often reminded me of you, and by obeying with some freedom the impulse of your first thought, you will likely transfuse this better than by too much study and erasion. On the whole you will like Musäus but not love him: his powers of head are akin to your own in some points, but he wants your *heart* with all its generous ardent feelings, and so never rises to be a true hero or anything approaching to it. When you and I have once arrived at the *years of discretion*, we shall look down with great composure on such people as Musäus: in the mean

time use him kindly, and his acquaintance will profit you.

Now, my dear Enemy, you must begin this business without delay; and keep by it constantly at the rate of about three hours (not more) daily, devoting the remainder of your time to finishing Gibbon, and writing immeasurable Letters to the Malignant Philosopher, and entertaining your Mother and the good people your neighbours who come to visit you. I also *insist* that you spend two or three hours every day in the open air: do this, Jane, for *my sake;* I know the consequence of excessive application; I would not have you in such a state as I have spent the last five years in, for all the Universe. And never fear, my beloved Scholar, that I shall try to persuade you to relinquish the noble purposes which nature and habit have alike appointed you to fulfil; if I seem to restrain your impetuosity, it is only that you may more surely and happily reach the goal. There is in fact, I see it more clearly every day, nothing but literature that will serve to make your life agreeable or useful. In your actual situation, you have two things to choose between: you may be a fashionable lady, the ornament of drawing-rooms and festive parties in your native district, the Wife of some prosperous man who will love you well and provide for you all that is choicest in the entertainment of common minds; or you may take the pursuit of truth and mental beauty for your highest good, and trust to fortune, be it good or bad, for the rest. The choice is important, and requires your most calm and serious reflexion. Nevertheless, I think you have decided like a prudent woman no less than like a heroine. I dare not promise that your life will be free from sorrows; for minds like yours deep sorrows are

reserved, take the world as you will: but you will also have noble pleasures, and the great intention of your being will be accomplished. As a fashionable fine-lady, on the other hand, I do not see how you could get through the world on even moderate terms: a few years at most would quite sicken you of such a life; you would begin by becoming wretched, and end by ceasing to be amiable. I see something of fashionable people here; and truly to my plebeian conception there is not a more futile class of persons on the face of God's earth. If I were doomed to exist as a man of fashion I do honestly believe I should swallow rats-bane or apply to hemp or steel before three months were over. There is something so *very* unsubstantial in their whole proceedings, such toiling and wrestling and so very little realized, that really I know not well how even stupid people can endure it. From day to day and year to year the problem is not how to use time, but how to waste it least painfully; they have their dinners and their routs, they move heaven and earth to get everything arranged and enacted properly, and when the whole is done, what is it? Had the parties all wrapped themselves up in warm blankets and kept their beds, much peace had been among several hundreds of his Majesty's subjects, and the very same result, the uneasy destruction of half a dozen hours, had been quite as well attained. Think of this lasting through forty years — insipidity around you, before you, and behind! It is no wonder that poor women take to opium and scandal: the wonder is rather that the queens of the land do not some morning, struck by the hopelessness of their condition, make a general finish by simultaneous consent, and exhibit to coroners and juries the spectacle of the whole world of

ton suspended by their garters, and freed at last from *ennui*, in the most cheap and complete of all possible modes. There is something in the life of a sturdy peasant toiling from sun to sun for a plump wife and six *eating* children: but as to the Lady Jerseys and the Lord Petershams — peace be with them. For *you*, my heroic Jane, there is nothing here, tho' in its utmost perfection, that could give one hour's true satisfaction; and wisely have you judged it better to choose a path of your own, beset perhaps with difficulties and dangers, but leading to glory and true nobleness, than to follow the multitude along a path, beaten enough indeed, but leading through inanity and chagrin to — nothing. Persist! Persist! and fear not that all will yet be well.

"Oh! but *I have no genius!*" I tell you on the contrary that you *have* a genius, you unthankful creature; every day I am growing surer of this: nothing but time and diligence are required to develope it in full splendour, tho' most likely in a shape very different from what you anticipate. So down to you *Volksmährchen*, and get along with them, and let me hear no more complaints. See that you have *Libussa* done when I arrive: if not, the consequences may be fatal.

I expect to be with you even earlier than I said; most probably in three weeks. I do trust you will let me see you at Haddington: we should have a week to spend together, in talking over the thousand things in which we have a common concern. I forget how often I have been disappointed of seeing you lately; many times I am sure: but I still keep hoping as if nothing of the kind had happened. I figure out myself and you sitting unmolested for hours in your drawing-room — talking with each

other of high matters — matters high to *us*, and taking counsel in concert about the affairs of the *commonwealth*, which are now assuming an aspect more difficult than ever to look on with coolness. O Jane! *if* there were no Subjunctive Mood — but all *ifs* abolished from the earth forever!

My life here is the most unprofitable and totally inane I ever found it. I think of little or nothing else but you; and that not like a man of sense, but like a foolish boy. I read none, I do not translate three pages of Goethe once a-week. Good Heavens! am I growing mad? I form ten thousand plans of future conduct, but each is weaker than its forerunner, each is rejected in its turn. I am also fast losing any little health I was possessed of: some days I suffer as much pain as would drive about three Lake Poets down to Tartarus; but I have long been trained in a sterner school; besides by nature I am of the *cat genus*, and like every cat, I have nine lives. I shall not die therefore, but unless I take some prudent resolution, I shall do worse. I often think of leaving these Bullers entirely; going home to my kind true-hearted Mother, for a year; and then with recovered health, fronting the hardest of the world once more. The people treat me with extreme consideration, the young men love me and are worth some love in their turn; but their way of life threatens to prove inconsistent with my very pitiful health; my employment is without vexation, but it leaves my best faculties *un*employed, leisure hours must be devoted to exercise; thus I accomplish nothing, but waste the flower of my existence — in earning daily bread. Absolutely this will not and shall not do. I signified to Buller today that I must have leave of absence shortly: I

mean to bring a horse with me when I return; I shall try Kinnaird for a week or two, and if I cannot keep in my usual tithe of health, and have some hours for better purposes, I am off, without sound of drum, forever and a day.

Well! here is surely a mournful tragedy, and a noble mind to bear the brunt of it! Why do I talk to you of it? Because you have a kind heart; and I am but a driveller to call for its sympathy with such despicable sorrows. Never mind me, my good Jane: allow me to fight with the paltry evils of my lot as best I may; and if I cannot beat them down, let me go to the Devil as in right I should. We have had too much of this!

How bright and serene and full of sunshine do all things appear when I turn from myself to *you!* Yes, in the darkest hour, some hope still lingers gilding the horizon, when I think of Jane; something of an ethereal nature is still blended for me with the clay of this world, when I think that she is my friend. May God reward you, my dearest, for what you have been to me! It may be that we shall yet be a happiness to one another; that we shall live thro' this earthly pilgrimage united in the noblest pursuits, in the bonds of true love, one heart one soul one fortune; and go down to other times inseparable after life as in it: it may be that we must part and see each other no more: but still we shall remember one another with affection and respect, and regard these dreams of our youth as among the fairest portions of our history.

But I must leave you again. Excuse the tattered state of these papers, and all the foolish things written on them. I began this Letter yesterday, and I have said twice as much as I intended or ought.

Write to me whenever you have *any* time: do, if you can; for I have no pleasure like what I get from listening to you. Tell me *all* that you feel or care for, all that is on your heart — as I do. What is become of that poor Youth? What are you doing? Are you well and happy? Write, write! I will answer you once on paper, and shortly after you will see me, if I am not too sick, which is not very likely. Good night, my dearest friend. — I am ever yours,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

Tomorrow if I have time I will send your Mother that old Song:[1] tonight it is too late.

LETTER 61

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

[*Forwarded to Templand*]

KINNAIRD HOUSE, 4th July, 1823.

MY DEAR JANE, — On opening this Letter I fear you will think I am growing one of the most troublesome fellows in the world. You can hardly yet have read the long narcotic Epistle which I sent you with the German Books; and ere two days have elapsed I am writing again! It is not without reluctance that I plague you *so soon;* but a sad embarrassment constrains me.

One of my finest hopes for the last six weeks was that of passing a day or two beside you, as I travelled into Annandale: this bright anticipation I am now in great danger of failing to get realized. These

[1] "Bridekirk's Hunting."

Bullers are persons about as steady in their resolves as the tarnished weather-cock that creaks above their coach-house: in place of August, when I was to get away, it now turns out that July is the time. *Another* flight of visitors threatens to alight here very shortly; and all parties seem to concur in the wish (I the most zealously of any) that they and I may not meet. Kinnaird House is small, they need my rooms: I am sick of the inanities of hunting captains, Jesus-college jockies, and silly women; a fresh arrival I would gladly avoid. So after much sage counsel it has been decided that I leave this place on the evening of Friday the 11th — that is precisely this night week. Next day and till Sunday I shall most likely be in Dundee, visiting an afflicted Schoolmaster [James Johnstone] — afflicted by the Methodist squires and dowagers — but intrinsically one of the most honest souls now alive. Poor Johnstone was the guide and companion of my boyhood; he may well claim all the very slender counsel or encouragement which I can now give him. On Monday I arrive in Edinburgh, and may then go to the East or the West as I think fit.

Now, what is to be done, my Dear? Must I turn home without seeing you, and begin a month, intended for enjoyment, in a humour soured by such a disappointment, instead of sweetened by all the inspirations I looked forward to? The odds I confess are against me, but I will not give up without an effort. If you are in Haddington, all may yet be well. In that case you will get my Letter on Monday morning first; you will immediately take counsel with your Mother and yourself whether it may be fit to grant the prayer of my petition; and then, like a fine creature as you are, let me know

the result without delay. If your Letter be in Edinburgh any time before ten o'clock on Thursday-evening, I calculate that it will find me here at least three hours before my departure. Should the response prove propitious, I shall linger no moment in that miserable City; most probably I shall be with you on the very day of my arrival there.

This will be a glorious thing as you may well believe: but alas! it is too uncertain to be reckoned on. Perhaps you are still at Templand; in which case, all the project is a castle in the air. Perhaps, tho' arrived at home, there are a hundred weighty reasons which forbid you to see me. Against these, do not think that I should murmur: you know sufficiently that I am now become quite an obedient subject, determined only not to quarrel with your will, in matters where it ought to be supreme. Most of the remaining hopes that still make life endurable, at times delightful, to me are connected with you: to see you therefore must be one of my chief wishes: but in all things which mutually concern us, you have long ago received an arbitrary jurisdiction, and well has the business prospered in your hands. Continue the same skilful management: in all matters great and small I have resolved to obey you cheerfully. Let me see or not see you, your orders shall be executed: the only decision that I totally and with all my soul protest against, is one which nothing but a wicked demon could inspire you with, the decision *that we are to part!* To this I will never consent. Never! You may do what you please to make me; may force me to hold my peace about it, but not to acquiesce in it: I will say that it was a wrong decision with my dying breath. But in all other points, I am " as clay in the hands

of the potter"; direct me according to your own sovereign will and pleasure, and see whether I will not comply!

If no Letter come from you next week, I shall infer that you are still in Nithsdale; and shall again beg that I may be allowed to see you as I return to the North. You will write to me *every week* in Annandale? I shall be there after *the* Monday-night; and asking every day for Letters from you. Yet do not strain yourself: if disappointed I shall only believe that you are too much occupied for writing to me, never that you are too careless of me. No, my own kind Jane! that is a thing I will *not* believe. The glorious fact that you are my friend is dear to me as his creed is to a bigot; I will hold fast my conviction of it till I *can* hold it no longer. Yet you will write me long letters often often? Will you not? Yes you will.

Some great revolution must take place in my poor history ere long. There are things tossing up and down this wretched soul of mine that *must* finally drive me mad, or kill me, or come out of me in some shape. God only knows how it shall be! There are times when I feel it sinful not to let go your hand forever: it is with me as if I were enveloped in the rushing of a mighty whirlwind that is dashing me onward to regions of unknown wildness and danger; and it seems *very* cruel to entice *you* from the sunny places you inhabit to take any share in a fate so dark and perilous. O my best beloved Jane! It would be a pang more bitter than any that ever struck thro' my heart, if I had to think that your happiness had been marred by *me*. As it was, I could have lived a kind of petrified existence, hoping nothing, loving nothing, fear-

ing nothing; and died when my time came, like a toil-worn slave, casting by his drudgery, and lying down to sleep where tasks and stripes shall never more awake him. As it *is*, an Elysian world is near me to tempt my footsteps, and my presence may desolate and blast it forever. God help us both! I know not what to say or think of it.

Are you laughing at me? Perhaps it is best: for the picture has a bright as well as dark side, and it is useless to gaze too much upon the latter. Suppose this genius that is in us — for there *is* a kind of genius in us both — tho' of what extent I cannot guess, but there it *is* I could swear on the Evangel — suppose it were developed fully and set before the world! — Fame, and wealth enough, and peace, and everlasting love to crown the whole! — O my Jane, what a life were ours! There is no Emperor that ever swayed the world whom I would change with. But we are both foolish persons, both far too ambitious — can we ever be happy? One thing alone is certain: I *will* love you to the last breath of my life, come of it what may. So God be with you my best Jane! There is nothing that I fear but *for you.* Adieu!

THOMAS CARLYLE.

LETTER 62

Miss Welsh to T. Carlyle, Mainhill

SOUTHWICK, GALLOWAY, 15th July, '1823.'

MY DEAR FRIEND, — If you are not strong in faith, you must be ready to cast me off as the most ungrateful of correspondents. But, tho' appearances are against me, I am not much in fault:

the first of your three Letters[1] which was addressed to Templand, reached me in due time; I was ashamed to answer it without having performed what you required; — and never had you assigned me so difficult a task.[2] *That* Letter cost me more thought than all the Letters I have written for a twelve-month; and after all a sillier never was penned. The very day it was sealed and sent, I wrote to *you* a long Letter — to be put into the Post-office at Dumfries, on my way hither. I was seated in the Mail, with the said Letter in my reticule, calculating as we drove along, how many days it would be before it reached Dunkeld, when the horse suddenly stopped, and your last,[3] addressed to Haddington, flew in at the window. Had I not been in the most prosaic situation imaginable, I might have fancied a pigeon or some winged spirit was in your service, and had borne it through the air to where I was. But alas! I was travelling from Thornhill to Dumfries by a Mail-coach, and not on the top, where (according to the Hero of Hatton Garden) poetical feelings and romantic situations suggest themselves *on Mondays;*[4] but within the dusty belly of the vehicle, with two "stout gentlemen" "whose talk was of bullocks."[5] What but the very prose

[1] That of 11 June (No. 59).

[2] Writing a letter of regret to the farmer's son. — See *ante*, Letter 59.

[3] Of 4 July (No. 61).

[4] "I have found nothing picturesque, or pathetic or sentimental amongst the people here [in London]. But, if Spring were arrived, I propose to myself excursions every Monday upon the roof of a stage-coach into the surrounding country, where I shall perhaps find something worthy of commemoration." — Irving to Miss Welsh, 23d Feb., 1823.

[5] "How can he get wisdom that holdeth the plough, and that

of life could appear to me in such a predicament? I understood immediately that the Postmistress at Thornhill had found the Letter on opening her bag, and being a civil woman, had forthwith despatched a messenger after the Mail to hand it in to me. I thanked her from the bottom of my heart. But the Letter itself was not so quickly understood. You apologised for writing me two Letters in two days, and I had not had one from you in two weeks; and then you spoke of visiting me in Dumfriesshire before you set out for Dumfriesshire! I could not comprehend your meaning at all till it occurred to me to look at the post-mark; and then when I saw the great black *Haddington*, the whole affair was intelligible enough. You had sent a parcel there, which of course I had never received, — our house being shut up and the Coach people not knowing where to address to me. What a genius-like proceeding! However, I trust the books will come by no harm.

You will perceive it was impossible for me to have answered your proposal in time; for you must have reached Mainhill before I knew you had left the North; nor could I write to you sooner than now. To have sent the Letter which I had ready, as it was, would only have made the burble worse; and I had not a minute to add a postscript at Dumfries; for the instant I arrived there, I was hurried on horse-back, and carried twenty miles that night into the wildest part of Galloway.[1] Here I have been

gloriethin the goad, that driveth oxen, and is occupied in their labours, and whose talk is of bullocks?" — "Ecclesiasticus," xxxviii. 25.

[1] To Boreland, her uncle George Welsh's home at Southwick, Galloway.

for a week, regretting the perplexity my silence might occasion you, without being able to remove it; for the people here never write Letters but on Wednesdays, and there is no post for the accommodation of strangers inclined to break through this regulation.

Tomorrow I return to Templand — that eternal[1] Templand — and if I hit on no other Letter from you between the Howe of Southwick and Dumfries, this intricate explanation will probably be deposited there in passing. — I scarcely know what I have written, nor have I time to write any more: I have ridden two and thirty miles since I rose this morning, and in half an hour I must be dressed to receive visitors to tea; but I shall have no time tomorrow, and I cannot be comfortable with the idea of you being uneasy at my silence. The life I am leading is enough to drive a Job out of his wits; and me who am no Job it will shortly kill outright.

Yesterday was my birthday: there is another year over my head and nothing, nothing done! I could cry with vexation and shame, — if strangers were not coming to tea. — I will write you more decently in a few days. My love to your Brother and little Sister. — Yours ever affectionately,

JANE BAILLIE WELSH.

[1] The epithet "eternal" clung to Miss Welsh through life. In later, but not more unhappy, years than the present, she applied it to Lady Ashburton's Town House: "that eternal Bath House."

Letter 63

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Templand

Mainhill, 18th July, 1823.

May blessings be upon you, my dear Jane, for the Letter I got yesterday! It delivered me from a load of perplexities: I had not been in so galling a predicament for many months. What had befallen us, what kept you silent so long, I could not with any plausibility conjecture. Of your truth and kindness I harboured no doubt; my "faith" in you will stand far severer trials. If the weakness of poor human nature perpetually exposes us to offend even those we love most, I know you too well to suspect that you can entertain anger against me, even with a just cause — feeling as you must how impossible it is that my will should sin in this particular, and how amiable it is to pardon and forget. Had you been of that punctilious temper, had you acted at all as an ordinary woman, we should never have advanced thus far; the first week of our acquaintance must have been the term of my services; I should then have received a perpetual *leave of absence*, and have stood forever, if I stood at all, in your remembrance, as simply the most untoward and unpleasant individual it had been your evil chance to meet with. Thank Heaven it is not so! No, no, "we will never never quarrel more!" Thus it stands in your own handwriting, in black and white against you: I keep the paper as a kind of *magna charta*, with which I put to flight the armies of the Alien whenever they attack me in that quarter. But if those partisans of the Enemy were so triumphantly

repulsed in their main attack, they came on with but the more vigour in the wings. I thought surely you must be sick, or embarrassed, or unhappy in some one of the thousand ways of being so. I believe I have the most benign imagination of any youth in His Majesty's dominions. When I learned that you were still in Nithsdale, and yet found no Letter for me here, it seemed as if something *very* awful was impending! I wrote twice to you, and burned my papers successively before they were concluded, that I might not plague you with my silly fantasies. At length I determined to wait till Saturday; then if news came not, to write in the most sublime manner; and after another week of fruitless expectation to begin being wretched in good earnest. But you are an excellent creature in your own way; among the hills of Galloway you had been caring for me. I was sitting yesterday with my eyes fixed on Jonathan's German lesson, and my thoughts wandering some twenty miles away from it, when your Letter came, — like the dove to Noah's ark, with a branch of olive in its bill, to show that the Earth was not yet quite ruined. Well! we should be thankful that all is right. I have only to add my humble prayer that *Mademoiselle* would never again keep me as long ignorant of her proceedings, never while we both continue in this world. This you call rather an impudent prayer; but the most part of pravers are so: you will do your best to grant it.

Why, now that the *burble* is all unravelled, I should risk producing it again, and at any rate afflict you so early with my scribbling, I know not; unless it be that my chief pleasure lies in afflicting you. Certainly you are a "great temporal blessing" to me in this respect. But I want also to keep you

in mind of that precious promise "to write to me at large in a day or two." See that you think of this to fulfil it! I must know your whole history, your enjoyments and chagrins, all your ups and downs for the last seven weeks. Above all, do not forget to consider and tell me, when and where I am to see you. I am not Job more than you are, tho' both of us are of kindred to Job's Wife. These disappointments are enough to exhaust one's stock of patience altogether. I do long to see you and talk with you in freedom. A thousand things are lying on my heart, which I dare not trust to paper, the half of which I should not trust to words: let me behold your fair face and black eyes, that I may study them, and see whether you are to me an angel of light, yea or nay. I believe you in my heart to be a sorceress, and that no good will ever come of you. Nevertheless let me examine face to face. Tell me *when*, and I will abide my time without complaining. At present I am scarcely more than twenty miles from Templand: it would be the easiest thing in nature for me to come riding so far across the moors, and the joyfullest, — if that were all. But I have so much confidence both in your affection and prudence that I will not think of attempting it without your express permission. It would indeed make the next a glad week: but I scarcely hope it. In that case, shall I see you at Haddington as I go up about the tenth of August? I do entreat you to contrive something: if I go back to Kinnaird without having seen you, I shall be fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils. No, I will not grow cholerick, but I shall be very sad. Write, write, and send me help if you can.

Poor little Jane got her book from you three

weeks ago; she has it covered with paper, and laid up in the most secret places of her drawer, guarding it so religiously from harm that she will not venture to read it, but has borrowed another copy for that purpose. She is prouder of it than of any other present ever given her; and well she may. My dear friend, you are really too good to me; I absolutely feel ashamed of your kindness when compared with my demerits. To think of your affection, and the many delightful ways you take of showing it, and then to think of all that I should have done for you and have not done, offers but a melancholy contrast. With my wishes towards you I have sometimes reason to be satisfied; but alas for their accomplishment! I have derived from you some of the finest enjoyments and hopes of my existence; natural feeling, tho' unseconded by such calls of gratitude, would imperiously command me to serve you: and all these claims I have yet to cancel! Well, I swear it shall yet be done! If it be in the power of fallen man, some suitable result *shall* come out of these many strivings. I think if I knew you happy and fulfilling the destiny for which nature marked you, I too should be happy. Let us hope, my best Jane, let us never cease to endeavour: in time we too shall have our day of triumph. Would it were here!

You regret unjustly the departure of another year: it has not departed in vain. You know much that you knew not this time twelvemonth; you seem to me in a much more reasonable state of mind; you are getting arrangements made for a better future: on the whole I am satisfied with your progress. Nor will this long rustication be altogether useless. You have need to be called away at times from dead

books and studies into the living world. A Blue imagines that all the interests of life are comprised within the letters of the Alphabet: a superior woman knows that many persons ignorant and careless of "literature" in all its branches, are more deserving of attention than ninety-nine hundredths of "the mob of gentlemen who write with ease."[1] There is a world that is not of types and printers: it is a too great abstraction from this warm variegated world that causes most of the misery and many of the faults which deform too frequently the literary life. I rejoice that you are with sensible persons that love you and are of habits so foreign to your own. Bear the interruption with patience: you will return to your studies with the greater ardour.

The good *Musäus* lies in durance for you at Haddington, longing to be free. You will make a brilliant figure with him before the Winter begins: I have given you all needful notices (and many things not needful besides) in a long melancholy Letter,[2] which I wrote when very sick. I calculated then on completing my instructions *verbally*. Shall I not be so favoured? Do think and study what is to be done. If I may come to Templand, expect me very soon: if not invent something else. At all events write to me as you promise *immediately*. If you *cannot* see me, now or in August, do not vex yourself about me; I shall arrange matters some other way, and still live on in hope. God bless you, my Dearest! Seeing you or not seeing you,

I am ever yours,

("In two days.") THOMAS CARLYLE.

[1] "The mob of gentlemen who wrote with ease." — HOR. "Epist.," Bk. ii. l. 108 (Pope's "Translation").

[2] No. 60 (1 July).

Letter 64

Miss Welsh to T. Carlyle, Mainhill

Templand, 21 July, '1823.'

My dear Friend,— In the Letter I wrote to you from Galloway I promised you a longer and more legible one in a day or two. I hoped to have a little time to myself on my return hither; but in this very moderate expectation I am disappointed: I have found the house full of company. There is my Uncle from Liverpool,[1] his Wife the most horrid woman on the face of the earth, and five such children! in addition to all that were here before. What with the Mother's scolding, and the children's squalling, and my Uncle's declaiming, and my Grandfather's fidgetting, I am half demented; and if no immediate alteration for the better takes place in my condition, you may expect to hear of me being drowned in the Nith or hanged in my garters. In vain I seek refuge in my own apartments; uproar is in every part of the house; and I am no sooner a-missing than the cry of "Cousin Pen! come down! come down!" reminds me I may not be my own mistress here. "Good Lord deliver me!" I am sore afflicted.

I have risen at six this morning for the purpose of fulfilling my promise to you before the hubbub commences; for I might as well think of flying to Ecclefechan on my quill as of writing a connected sentence after "*Baby's*" first scream has announced her waking.

[1] Her maternal uncle, John Welsh. — See "Reminiscences," i. 95.

Such a week I spent in Galloway! There was no amusement within doors, and the weather precluded the chance of finding any without. "Cœlebs in Search of a Wife" was the only book in the house, and even that was monopolised by a young lady who came to my Uncle's (I strongly suspect) on Cœlebs' errand. The rest of us had no weapon of any sort to combat time with, and for four whole days I sat counting the drops of rain that fell from the ceiling into a bowl beneath, or in burbling the chain of my watch for the pleasure of undoing it. "Oh Plato! what tasks for a Philosopher!"[1] At length in a frenzy of ennui I mounted a brute of a horse that could do nothing but trot, and rode till I was ready to drop from the saddle,—just for diversion. I left my companions wondering when it would be fair; and when I returned they were still wondering. How very few people retain their faculties in rainy weather!

I staid two days in Dumfries on my way back; and these two days were not so uninteresting as the preceding ones. Who do you think was there at the same time, but the gallant artist[2] I took a fancy to last July, and whom I had imagined still breathing the atmosphere of Goethe? But I did not see him, or rather I did not speak with him; for I actually saw him — on the opposite bank of the river! Let any one conceive a more tantalizing situation!

[1] "O Plato, Plato, what a task for a philosopher!" exclaimed Julian (hitherto a recluse) when he awkwardly repeated some military exercise which he was obliged to learn on being chosen Governor of the Provinces of Gaul. — "Decline and Fall," ch. xix.

[2] "Benjamin B——," Miss Welsh's "new friend." — See *ante*, Letter 27.

THE RIVER NITH AND AULDGIRTH BRIDGE

Saw him, and durst not make the smallest effort to attract his notice! tho' had my will alone been consulted on the matter — to have met him "eye to eye and soul to soul" — I would have swam, ay swam across at the risk of being dosed with water-gruel for a month to come! Oh, this everlasting etiquette! how many and how ungrateful are the sacrifices it requires!

Tomorrow I am off again on another visit! — to be tormented (I have no doubt) after some other fashion. Alas! my beloved German! my precious, precious time! But if ever my good Mother gets me wheedled here again! Three weeks, indeed! I conjectured how it would be from the very first. Long ago when I was always at home and happier than I shall ever be again, how I envied my companions who went about visiting and seeing sights! How I grieved when my Father silenced my petitions for the same indulgence, telling me it was time to be idle when I had nothing more to learn. The very last time that he refused to gratify my idle inclinations, I felt so disappointed, fool that I was! and thought him so severe. I remember he took my hand and said to me, "You are vexed, Jane, but you will thank me *hereafter* for the restraint you *now* repine at. Oh, you will have *enough* of these unprofitable pleasures before all's done: you will not always be at home with *me*." These were prophetic words. There was something so mournful and tender in his look and voice when he pronounced them, that I could not restrain my tears. I know not how it was, from that moment my heart was heavy, as if I had had a presentiment of the calamity that approached me. The very same day his illness commenced, and I was forced away from

him. But I sat by the door of his room, and heard his voice; and when it was opened I saw his face. And sometimes I stood an instant by his bed in spite of their efforts to remove me. And then he looked so anxious, and said to my Mother, "Will you not send her away?" Oh, my God! the recollections of that short awful period of my life will darken my being to the grave. I have indeed had "enough" of the unprofitable pleasures I so much longed for!

Here is another Letter from you! My head ached so I went to bed again, and was enjoying one of the finest dreams imaginable, when the breakfast bell summoned me back to less agreeable reality. I had seated myself at table in no very ravenous mood, when what should I perceive upon my plate but a Letter bearing the external marks that always insure to yours a hearty welcome! Well, you are an inimitable correspondent! But you must not come here! On considering the circumstances I am placed in, you will perceive the nonsense of the project. There can be no objection to our meeting at Haddington, if I am there at the time you mention; but of this I am as doubtful as yourself. As long as our friends here press my Mother to stay she will not stir. My only hope is in tiring them. Who told you the people I am with are *sensible?* They are no such thing; neither do they love me, tho' they treat me civilly. Fewer people love me than one might imagine. You do; my Mother does; Mr. Irving does; and one or two more that shall be nameless; but depend on it, *love* is by no means the general sentiment I inspire. "Speaking of swine," what is become of our gigantic Friend? Where is his book? I wrote to him some

DR. WELSH

months ago, but he has vouchsafed me no reply. He has not a head for these London flatteries. I would write him again a Letter of admonition, — yea verily a Letter of admonition to the "great centre of attraction," to the Spanish Adonis, to the Revd. Edward Irving himself! if I were sure of his address. Do you opine he is still in Grosvenor Street? It is all over with him if he forgets his earliest and best friends.

You must send me "Bridekirk's Hunting," in all haste. My Mother was expressing her surprise the other day that you had never thought of transcribing *her* Song in any one of the many Letters I had received from you since you mentioned it. I told her it was lying for me at Haddington (is it?), but that I would beg of you to forward another copy without delay. Write nothing on the same page that may not meet the inspection of a dozen people. — I was so hurried when I wrote last that I forgot to thank you for the beautiful little *Tacitus:* it was sent me with some other articles from Edinburgh, where I understand it had been lying for some time. It is a pity there is no other language of gratitude but what is in everybody's mouth. I am sure the gratitude I feel towards *you* is not in every body's *heart.* — I have a good deal more to say at the present moment, but the children — oh, the children! if you only heard them! Kiss little Jane for me, and remember me to your Brother. — Yours always affectionately,

Jane Baillie Welsh.

I have only fulfilled my promise in half: my Letter is *long*, but scarcely *legible.*

Letter 65

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Templand

Mainhill, 28th July, 1823.

My dear Jane, — I should have allowed this week to pass without troubling you, had it not been that you seemed anxious to get *your Mother's Song* without delay. The chain of causes and effects is truly wonderful. This old hunting-catch has often been vociferated in surly bass tones through the windpipes of twenty roystering Carlyles, greatly exciting their "swill of whisky and their flow of soul"; and now that these worthy men are all dead and gone, the same immortal rhyme procures to me, their undeserving clansman, the pleasure of writing to my best friend. I shall forgive the stalwart Laird[1] for all his pranks, if he often serve me in such stead.

You must not drown yourself in the Nith, or anywhere else, till you see farther about you. The kind of life you are leading is in truth vexatious enough; — yielding no enjoyment in the present, and no result for the future but the sad thought of wasted time; it might tire a more prosaic character than you. "Too much of one thing" is an adage in all modern and ancient tongues. Even I am beginning to wish you home again: if you cannot manage it otherwise, I think you ought actually to

[1] Adam Carlyle, Laird of Bridekirk in Annandale, whom the Rev. Alexander Carlyle of Inveresk speaks of as "a kinsman." For a correct version of "Bridekirk's Hunting" see "Scottish Song," by Mary Carlyle Aitken, Macmillan & Co., London 1874.

set about "wearying them out" as soon as possible. Nevertheless you need not repine very much for all the mischief that has yet taken place. You have the prospect of a long and free life before you: plenty of days and months will remain after all abatements. These interruptions distress and irritate you, and it is natural they should: but no mortal ever got his whole time consecrated to worthy pursuits; and the history of literary men in particular should teach one patience under many obstructions. Cowper became an author for the first time at fifty. Johnson in his old age said with a kind of gloomy pathos that "much of his life had been wasted under the pressure of disease, much of it had been trifled away, much of it had always been spent in making provision for the day that was passing over him";[1] yet who would not say that Johnson did enough? You remember Milton; how he wrote Latin Grammars, and taught schools, and fought in the arena of Politics, as well as made *Comus* and *Paradise Lost*. Did not poor old Hooker write his *Ecclesiastical Polity* in the middle of gridirons and foul platters and squealing children, and what was worse than all, within earshot and arm's length of a scolding sooty hilding whom he had to wife? Alas! my dear Jane, this world, take it as we will, is made of most unpliant stuff. I should think myself happy could I promise that even one tenth part of my existence would be at my disposal for any purpose above those of the beasts that perish. But it will not be; and often it burns my heart to think it will not. For you however I see better things in store. Deep

[1] See Dr. Johnson's "Prayers and Meditations."

cause as you have to regret that best and truest Friend and Father, whom you lost so mournfully, and on whose memory you will ever dwell with such a sad fondness, I cannot but perceive that by far the most trying period of your life is already passed with safety. No one will ever counsel you in difficulties with so faithful and disinterested a mind as that good man who is gone; no one! — not even I can speak to you once in ten times without some pitiful sneaking undercurrent, less or more, of selfish or half-selfish motives — for which I often heartily despise myself: but a counsellor that can never wilfully deceive you, your own judgement, is coming fast to maturity, and will bear you thro' triumphantly. There are the most ample materials to work upon, the best purposes, the best powers, and freedom to employ these advantages greater than falls to the lot of one in a hundred. I know you often ponder these things, and study plans for a long future: by degrees you will learn as you seriously search for it, the art of surmounting or evading the obstacles that thwart you, and of reaping their full profit from the many circumstances that favour you. I have prophesied your complete success a hundred times: I still prophesy it more undoubtingly than ever. There is *no* fear: if your will is steadfast enough, nothing can repel you.

Bad luck to Bridekirk! He cuts me off in the middle of my story, when I had a million of things to explain, and many that cannot wait. Will you write instantly, and give me instant leave to answer? I begin to think I shall *not* see you: Heaven give me patience! I have been twenty times unhappier, but never more serious than even now. O that I *could* form some settled and feasible plan of life! I

am weary of this wayfaring existence I have led so long: but *what* to do to alter it? — God bless you!

T. CARLYLE.[1]

LETTER 66

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Templand.

MAINHILL, 10 August, 1823.

MY DEAR JANE, — Unless you have a Letter for me already on the road, you need not send any hither to find me. I leave this place on Wednesday or Thursday at farthest; I must be at Kinnaird against this day week. You are not gone to Haddington, or you would have given me notice; I can therefore entertain no hope of seeing you at this time: I must return into the Highlands with all my projects of that sort unfulfilled, applying the old and very ineffectual remedy, their everlasting "patience," and looking forward to a kinder future, most probably that I may again be disappointed. If it were not that Fate is an inflexible thing, and calmness of mind a very great blessing, I should even now be tempted to break forth into something like the curse of Ernulphus[2] against all the arrangements of this lower world. But it is far wiser to apply to you by way of entreaty, than to such a power as Fate by way of compulsion. I beg therefore and pray that, in consideration of all my late mischances, you will write Letters to me more fre-

[1] The foregoing Letter is written on a half-sheet of letter-paper; the other half (now lost) contained a copy of "Bridekirk's Hunting."

[2] For the "Curse of Ernulphus" see "Tristram Shandy," Bk. iii. ch. 2.

quently and largely than ever. If you think me impudent in uttering such unconscionable wishes, consider that *you* are almost all that yet survives to me, in a living shape, of the poetry of life. Year after year and tempest after tempest have passed over my little world, till it has grown grim and savage like the middle of a wilderness. But with you to enlighten it as a "golden all-rejoicing sun," its "rocks bogs caves and dens of death"[1] lose their horrors, to become in some degree sublime; and the green *oases* that besprinkle it show like islands of the Blessed. No wonder that I long for your presence, or any emblem of it, more than aught in the world beside. If I were a great Poet I would sing of it in strains that should live forever: but alas! I am a proser in every sense, and cannot speak of it, you see, except "in King Cophetua's vein."[2] In prose therefore let me repeat my prayer, and leave the fulfilment of it with your own goodness, ever lenient to all my faults: do not forget me, above all things — till you cannot help it; and write to me

[1] "Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shades of death —
A universe of death." — "Paradise Lost," ii. 621–2.

[2] See in "Percy's Reliques" the old ballad (referred to by Shakespear in various plays), "King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid." This King had hitherto "cared not for women-kind, but did them all disdain." This angered Cupid, "the blinded Boy that shoots so trim," and he sent a dart which pierced the King to the quick, so that he was compelled, much against his will, to fall in love with a Beggar Maid. They were married, and lived long, happily and prosperously, and died honoured and lamented by their subjects. — A more common phrase is, "In King Cambyses' vein," used by Shakespear in "King Hen. IV," Pt. i. Act ii. sc. 4; and also by Carlyle in his Preface to "Meister's Apprenticeship." King Cophetua's vein seems to have been that of remonstrance, King Cambyses', that of passion.

as nearly once a-day as your more important duties will possibly allow. Never dream that you have nothing to say: I like you best of all when you begin writing without a word to say; I am sure of a thousand delightful things when you abandon your soul to me without reserve, and send me all your "diabolical" thoughts and feelings just as they arise. — Now is it not strange that I am ever wasting paper on this subject, long ago fixed as the law of the Medes and Persians which altereth not; ever corresponding by talking about correspondence? Is it not strange that the miser goes fifty times a-day to unbolt his strong-box, and see if his guineas *are* there? Strange, if it were not frequent; and so it is with me. I can never make myself thoroughly believe that our correspondence will last, as I know our affection will; and anxieties on this point continually beset me. I perceive that by and by I am going to love you about ten times as well as I have ever done; and yet my hopes, if they deserved the name, are growing fainter every day. What will be the end of it? God only knows! In the meantime, let the end be as it will, do, for Heaven's sake, show me some plan of doing you useful service, and ten times more effectual than anything I have yet accomplished. It is absolutely becoming in my view one of my most sacred duties to watch over your interests and improvement, to foster you, my bonny flower, that are yet wasting your sweetness on the desert air, but will in time be seen of all the world as well as me. Oh, if it were so; and I your protector and chosen stay, where is the man, or was, that I would change conditions with?

One thing I wish heartily, that you were home again, and once more settled at your employment.

Poor *Musäus!* you will hardly get the smallest impression made upon him till Winter will be here. And what is worse, this idle mode of life will be driving you entirely distracted. Patience! patience! yet a little while, and you will be secure from all these vexations; and happy, because employed in useful tasks. Translate these *Volksmährchen* in your best style, and they will answer admirably. You have also much to read and write, to consider and arrange. Be diligent and ever watchful: I will yet crown you with laurels with this hand, and steal twenty kisses for my pains. Forward! forward! let us both press towards the mark with unwearied perseverance; we shall both be happy, and by each other's means. This is the fixed persuasion of my reason, let the Devil tempt my imagination as he will. I will hold it fast as my integrity, till the last moment that I can hold it.

Have you actually "admonished" the great Centre of Attraction? If not, wait for two months, and you will see his "raven locks and eagle eye" as you have done of old, and may admonish him by word of mouth. I was at Annan; and found *the* Argument for Judgment to Come, in a clear type, just arrived, and news that Irving himself was returning soon to the North — to be married! The Lady is Miss Martin of Kirkcaldy — so said his Mother. On the whole I am sorry that Irving's preaching has taken such a turn. It had been much better, if without the gross pleasure of being a newspaper Lion and a season's wonder, he had gradually become, what he must ultimately pass for, a preacher of first-rate abilities, of great eloquence and great absurdity, with a head fertile above all others in sense and nonsense, and a heart of the

most honest and kindly sort. As it is, our friend incurs the risk of many vagaries and disasters, and at best the certainty of much disquietude. His path is steadfast and manly, in general only when he has to encounter opposition and misfortune; when fed with flatteries and prosperity, his progress soon changes into "ground and lofty tumbling," accompanied with all the hazards and confusion that usually attend this species of movement. With three newspapers to praise him and three to blame, with about six Peers and six dozen Right Honourables introduced to him every Sunday, tickets issuing for his church as if it were a theatre, and all the devout old women of the Capital treating him with comfits and adulation, I know that ere now he is "striking the stars with his sublime head:"[1] well if he do not break his shins among the rough places of the ground! I wish we saw him safely down again, and walking as other men walk. The comfort is he has a true heart and genuine talents: so I conclude that after infinite flounderings and pitchings in the mud he will at last settle much about his true place, just as if this uproar had never taken place. For the rest, if he does not write to his friends, the reason is, not that he has ceased to love them, but that his mind is full of tangible interests continually before his face. With him at any time the present is worth twenty times the past and the future; and such a present as this he never witnessed before. I could wager any money that he thinks of you and me very often, tho' he never writes to either; and that he longs above all to know what we do think of this monstrous flourishing of drums and trumpets in which he lives and

[1] "Sublimi feriam sidera vertice."—HORACE, "Odes," i. 36.

moves. I have meant to write to him very frequently for almost three months; but I know not well how to effect it. He will be talking about "the Lord," and twenty other things, which he himself only wishes to believe, and which to one that knows and loves him are truly painful to hear. See that you do not think unkindly of him; for except myself, there is scarcely a man in the world that feels more true concern for you.

Happy Irving that is fitted with a task that he loves and is equal to! He entertains no doubt that he is battering to its base the fortress of the Alien, and lies down every night to dream of planting the old true blue Presbyterian flag upon the summit of the ruins. When shall you and I make an onslaught upon the empire of Dulness and bring back *spolia opima*[1] to dedicate to one another? Some day yet, I swear it! Let us fear nothing: but believe that diligence will conquer every difficulty, and act on that belief. — Heaven grant I may get a Letter from you ere I go. My solitary ride will otherwise be full of vague and unpleasant speculations. At all events you will not keep me waiting at Kinnaird. Tell me what are your purposes and proceedings, your hopes and fears. I send you all the crudities that enter my head: are we two not *friends forever?* I will also see you soon tho' I should ride from Dunkeld for that special purpose. God bless you, Jane! I am ever yours,

T. Carlyle.

[1] The *opima* were the spoils which a Roman general could win only from the king or general of the enemy, whom he had slain with his own hands. They were therefore most highly prized and rarely won.

TEMPLAND

Letter 67

Miss Welsh to T. Carlyle, Kinnaird House

Hell[1] [Post-mark Thornhill],
19th August, '1823.'

My dear Friend, — Your last Letter was especially welcome: it came in a lucky moment. I had just been (or fancied I had been) most barbarously dealt with, and was ready to hang or drown myself in good earnest; but the sight of your handwriting can cheat me out of ill-humour at any time; it always presents so many delightful images, and excites so many delightful expectations! Oh, you have no notion how great a blessing our correspondence is to me! When I am vexed, I write my grievances to you; and the assurance I have that your next Letter will bring me consolation, already consoles me. And then, when your Letter comes — when it repeats to me that *One* in the world loves me — will love me ever, ever, — and tells me more boldly than Hope, that my future *may* yet be glorious and happy, there is no obstacle I do not feel prepared to meet and conquer. I owe you much! feelings and sentiments that ennoble my character, that give dignity, interest and enjoyment to my life. In return, I can only love you, and *that* I do, from the bottom of my heart.

You have known me in many curious predicaments; but never so unhappily circumstanced as now. Every hour this unlucky visit grows more

[1] Templand, home of Walter Welsh, Miss Welsh's maternal grandfather.

irksome to me, *home* more dear, and hope more distant. My precious time, that is never to return, is passing on, on, and still I am doing nothing — or worse than nothing. "*Ach! dieser geschäftiger Müssiggang, es kommt mir sauer an!*" [Ah! this strenuous idleness, it comes hard on me!] Were but the day *fixed* for our setting out, I would strive to imitate Job a little longer; but the only result of patience is still *patience!* It is as my little Aunt[1] well defined it, "To wait a wee, and wait a wee, and maybe no get what ye're wanting after a'"! So I will have nothing more to do with it; but be a plague to myself and every body about me, till my visit and my vexations are at an end. How my fingers itch to pack! and if ever they unpack here again, I should deserve — to stay four months! I can think of nothing worse. But I must have done with this eternal fretting, or even *your* sublime *patience* will not carry you through.

So "*the* Argument" is out, and we shall all be convinced at last! I have a notion it will be lying for me at Haddington, keeping company with that unfortunate German[2] (whose name I have never yet been able to read). When our illustrious friend wrote for the four of his sermons which he had "introduced into my Mother's family, as the bequest of his parting" (or rather departing) "love," he promised in the most affecting terms, "that these helps of our devotions" should ere long be "restored to us, under the more splendid title of Orations, and in the garb of print" (and much they needed some other "garb" than his crabbed hand; for all the time of their sojourn with us, no

[1] Jeannie Welsh, Mrs. Welsh's younger sister.
[2] Musäus.

living soul could read them)! But possibly he may not feel the same interest in our "devotions" now that he has so many other people's to attend to. — Tell me did you write the critique on his book, which appeared in the *Sunday Times*. I had not read two sentences of it till I said to myself, "this is He!" Do not forget to tell me. I shall be disappointed if I find I have mistaken your style. Tell me too what you are doing. And what is the fate of *Meister*.

When shall a world know your worth as I do? You laugh at the stir I make about fame; but I suspect my sentiments on that subject, stript of the "garb" of my expressions, which is at times fantastic enough, are not very dissimilar to your own. *You* are *not satisfied* living thus, bowing a haughty genius to the paltry necessity of making provision for your daily wants, stifling the fire of an ambitious soul with hard-learned lessons of humility; or expending it in idle longings and vague, colourless schemes. "The wheel of your destiny *must* turn." I have heard you say so; and you have power to turn it — giant power. But when shall the effort be made? When will your genius burst through all obstructions and find its proper place? It *will*, — "as the bolt bursts on high from the black cloud that bound it"![1] Of *that* I have no fear; but when? Oh! that I heard a nation repeat your name! You may call it a mistaken ambition, a weak dependence on the opinion of others, — you may

[1] "As the bolt bursts on high
From the black cloud that bound it,
Flashed the soul of that eye
Through the long lashes round it."
— Byron, "Bride of Abydos," canto i. 336–9.

call it what you will, but I *will* wish you *famous* as long as there is room for such a wish.

I heard your "Life of Pascal"[1] criticised the other day: I daresay the people would have suspected I wrote it myself, if they had not known me; for my face was crimson all the time. *They were very intelligent people.*

The clock has struck twelve, and my Mother is in bed, and will *make a point* of not sleeping till I go; so I must leave my margins unfilled. — Write soon.

Yours ever,

JANE BAILLIE WELSH.

I was dancing about the country last week as usual, or I would have answered your former Letter. You seem to have such an affection for my Letters that I always feel it necessary to apologize when I am more than a few days in writing. Upon my word it is good of you to say they give you pleasure. I am sure *I* would not thank any one for Letters so full of self, and a self that is eternally in the dismals; but I *will* write to you often,— not because I believe my Letters so great a grati-

[1] This is doubtless the article on Pascal which appears in Brewster's "Edinburgh Encyclopædia," vol. 16, pp. 332–5. Until now it does not seem to have been recognised as Carlyle's, and is not included in the book called "Montaigne and other Essays," which purports to be a reprint of Carlyle's contributions to Brewster's undertaking. The article on Pascal is clearly in Carlyle's early style, and is interesting because it contains his first refutation of the false doctrine that "Nature abhors a vacuum," and also his first reference to Arnauld's "Rest? Rest? Shall I not have all Eternity to rest in?" — The advanced Scientists of Pascal's time believed that the mercury rose in the exhausted tube of the barometer because Nature abhorred a vacuum!

fication to you, but because I have pleasure in writing my thoughts and feelings to the only living soul that seems to understand them. — Oh my Mother!

Letter 68

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Templand

Kinnaird House, 31 Aug., 1823.

My dear Jane, — I have longed for the arrival of this day, as the reward of a week's disquietude and toil: I determined not to write, till I should have it in my power to say that I was settled at my tasks, and doing something, however small. The miserable weather kept me four days later in arriving than I had expected: your Letter (with a heap of meaner scrolls)[1] was waiting to welcome me. And such a welcome! I felt in reading it and reading it again, as if it were more to me than the charter to all the metal of Potosi. What a frank and true and noble spirit is my Jane's! No artifice, no vulgar management; her sentiments come warm and fearless from her heart, because they are pure and honest as herself, and the friend whom she trusts, she trusts without reserve. I often ask myself: "Is not all this a dream? Is it true that the most enchanting creature I have ever seen does actually love me? No! thank God it is not a dream: Jane loves me! she loves me! and I swear by the

[1] Among them, one from his Reverence of Hatton Garden, good enough in its way. His Book is come this minute — a copy purchased by Mrs. Buller. I did *not* write the critique you mention: I have not yet read a word of the performance. T. C.

Immortal Powers that she shall yet be mine, as I am hers, thro' life and death and all the dark vicissitudes that await us here or hereafter." In more reasonable moments, I perceive that I am very selfish and almost mad. Alas! my fate is dreary and obscure and perilous: is it fit that you, whom I honour as among the fairest of God's works, whom I love more dearly than my own soul, should partake in it? No, my own best of Maidens, I will not deceive you. Think of me as of one that will live and die to do you service; whose good will if his good deeds cannot, may perhaps deserve some gratitude; but whom it is dangerous and useless to love. If I were intellectual sovereign of all the world, if I were — But it is vain to speculate: I know that I am nothing. I know not that I shall not always be so. The only thing I know is that you are the most delightful, enthusiastic, contemptuous, affectionate, sarcastic, capricious, warm-hearted, lofty-minded, half-devil, half-angel of a woman that ever ruled over the heart of a man; that I will love you, must love you, whatever may betide, till the last moment of my existence; and that if we both act rightly our lot *may* be the happiest of a thousand mortal lots. So let us cling to one another (if you dare when thus forewarned) — forever and ever! Let us put faith in one another, and live in hope that prospects so glorious and heavenly will not end in darkness and despair. If your happiness be shipwrecked by my means, then woe, woe is to me without end! But it will not: no, you will yet be blessed yourself in making me more blessed than man has right to look for being upon earth. God bless you, my heart's Darling; and grant that our honest purposes may prosper in our hands!

All these incoherent inconsistent things you have often heard already: but you will bear with me in uttering them yet again. For me no subject connected with our correspondence and affection for each other needs the charm of novelty to make it interesting. If it were repeated to me fifty times a-day that you loved me, I should still desire to hear it oftener. For the present, however, I must let you go.

How is it that you have lost all influence with your Mother, that she will not return and let you be at rest? I declare even I am beginning to get vexed at these delays. No wonder that you murmur, that you have given patience to the winds, and become determined to look on Templand only as a place of torment. That "strenuous idleness"[1] was not made for minds like yours. Yet what is to be done? You have forsworn the understrapping virtue of submissive endurance; cannot you betake yourself to the more profitable resources of activity? Might you not write to the little Doctor to send you down Musäus (can you read it now?) from the coach-office; and then bolt your chamber-door, and sit down to *render* it, in Nithsdale as in Lothian? If you are not to depart in a week or two, I do think you should try this. These *Volksmährchen* are a promising enough kind of task for you: you will translate them excellently, I have no fear; and Boyd to whom I talked on the subject, as I last went thro' Edinburgh, is all in trim to have them published. I think they will make a very pretty volume, and a fair commencement of your intellectual labours. About your talents and ultimate success I have less doubt every day. No soul so vehement, no heart

[1] The *geschäftiger Müssiggang* of Miss Welsh's last Letter.

so fine as yours, but must ultimately come to light, to full development and full reward, in spite of difficulties far weightier than yours. Be restless, then, but not unhappy at your present isolation. I would ride their horses to death, and dispute every word they said, till they let me go. Long before October, when I see you, you will have advanced far into Musäus; full of ardent thoughts and cheered by gleams of celestial promise, you will have exchanged the residence of "Hell" for a region that stretches to the neighbourhood of Heaven. If you are so delicious in *that* ugly abode, what will you be in the other! Be at peace, then, if you can, till the hour of freedom arrive. There is a long and brilliant life before you: trust in yourself and me, my best beloved Jane; and fear nothing. For you I am still a prophet of good not of evil. Stand to your task, and there is no danger.

You ask me what are my employments and my plans; you speak to me like my guardian Angel as you are. My feelings you seem perfectly to understand; I thank you a thousand times for your encouragements and sympathy; and I still hope however feebly that a day will come when you will say that they have not been in vain. Alas! no! I am not satisfied: my mind is a prey to everlasting strife when I contrast what I would be with what I am. There is a restless ardour in my heart as in yours. Like you I am ambitious, far too much so, tho' I phrase it otherwise; but the root of my inquietude lies far deeper than yours. My character is full of contradictions; outwardly, on the surface as it were, I am timid as a leveret;[1] while within there are feelings that might suit a tiger — fierce,

[1] A young hare.

desperate, deep tormenting feelings! Hence a perpetual inconsistency in my conduct; hence my habit is less to act than to endure; hence the great principle that moves me is little better than a kind of — desperation! Poor Gentleman! I wonder what is to be done with him at last. A difficulty harder than all and partly peculiar I have yet to mention. O how often, when sicker than I am now, have I prayed that I might but be broken on the wheel every morning, and then have nothing more to do with pain! O! thrice and four times accursed "physical disease";[1] Tophet has not in its recesses such a tremendous scourge as thou! But what avails it to speculate? This evil also is but another element in the chaos of materials out of which the intellect and the will (if any) are to create a glorious and manly history. This evil too I will overcome. I have brought a horse out with me hither; I am trying every precaution to keep myself in tolerable health; in three weeks, if I find that I *cannot* live here without the loss of that priceless blessing, I shall return to Mainhill — where a single month had almost made me whole. Meanwhile too I am not unemployed: after long re-deliberations, I have been decided (by the Bookseller) to go on with Goethe.[2] Ten pages a day is my task: with riding, and teaching and other drivelling, I seldom get

[1] The "physical disease" Carlyle suffered from was dyspepsia brought on by overwork and unsuitable diet. Fifteen months before this date he had written to his friend Mitchell: "I entertain a kind of expectation of being at length delivered from that first and greatest — that sum total of all worldly tortures, the torture of *dyspepsia*." Complete deliverance never came, though there was considerable amelioration after leaving Perthshire, which seemed to disagree with him more and more the longer he staid in it.

[2] The translation of "Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship."

begun till six at night. Some parts of *Meister* are very stupid, and it is all very difficult to translate. But "let us not despise the day of small things!" All experience tells us that *mountains may be removed by faith.* Yes! I swear it, my noble Jane, you and I *shall* yet vanquish all these mean impediments, and shine together in the degree of brilliancy which *is* ours by nature, whatever that may be. If *not* — then woe to that man, it were good for him that he had never been born! In November they expect to begin printing *Meister;* when will *Musäus* be ready? Work, work, my heroine! There is nothing but toil, toil, toil, — till we reach the golden glowing summit, — and then! — ! — But I must cease, tho' the thousandth part has not been told. O do write to me constantly, and often, often: let *no week* pass without writing to me: we are *one* heart and soul forever, and each of us has none but the other to love and look to. Adieu my ever-dearest!

I am always yours,

T. Carlyle.

Write to me without any delay, if you love me. I have millions of things to say, and boundless desire to say them. I *will* see you in October, if both of us are this side Hades. Be diligent and good and love me with all your heart as I do you.

Letter 69

Miss Welsh to T. Carlyle, Kinnaird House

Haddington, 16th September, '1823.'

My dear Friend, — Your Letter only reached me this morning, — I having sojourned at Templand more than ten days, "expecting an opportunity." Charming as it is, I could almost wish it had not cast up at all, for it has troubled me more than I can tell. I feel there is need I should answer it without delay. And what can I say to you? It is so hard to explain oneself in such a situation! But I must, and in plain terms; for any reserve at present were criminal and might be very fatal in its consequences to [us] both.

You misunderstand me. You regard me no longer as a Friend, a Sister, but as one who at some future period may be more to you than both. Is it not so? Is it not true that you believe me, like the bulk of my silly sex, incapable of entertaining a strong affection for a man of my own age without having for its ultimate object our union for life? "Useless and dangerous to love you"! "My happiness wrecked by you"! I cannot have misinterpreted your meaning! And, my God! what have I said or done to mislead you into an error so destructive to the confidence that subsists betwixt us, so dangerous to the peace of both? In my treatment of you, I have indeed disregarded all maxims of womanly prudence; have shaken myself free from the shackles of etiquette; I have loved and admired you for your noble qualities, and for the extraordinary affection you have shown me; and I have told

you so without reserve or disguise; but not till our repeated quarrels had produced an explanation betwixt us, which I foolishly believed would guarantee my future conduct from all possibility of misconstruction. I have been to blame. I might have foreseen that such implicit confidence might mislead you as to the nature of my sentiments, and should have expressed my friendship for you with a more prudent reserve. But it is of no use talking of what I might or should have done in the time past. I have only to repair the mischief in as far as I can, now that my eyes are opened to it, now that I am startled to find our relation actually assuming the aspect of an engagement for life.

My Friend, I love you. I repeat it, tho' I find the expression a rash one. All the best feelings of my nature are concerned in loving you. But were you my Brother I would love you the same; were I married to another I would love you the same. And is this sentiment so calm, so delightful, but so unimpassioned, enough to recompense the freedom of my heart, enough to reconcile me to the existence of a married woman, the hopes and wishes and ambitions of which are all so different from mine, the cares and occupations of which are my disgust![1] Oh no! Your Friend I will be, your truest most devoted Friend, while I breathe the breath of life; but your Wife! Never, never! not though you were as rich as Crœsus, as honoured and as renowned as you yet shall be.

You may think I am viewing the matter by much too seriously; taking fright when there is nothing to fear. It is well if it be so! But suffering as I

[1] From "were I married" to "are my disgust" is omitted by Mr. Froude without any mark of omission. — See "Life," i. 182.

am at this very moment from the horrid pain of seeing a true and affectionate heart near breaking for my sake, it is not to be wondered at tho' I be over-anxious for your peace on which my own depends in a still greater degree. Write to me and reassure me, for God's sake if you can! Your friendship at this time is almost necessary to my existence. Yet I will resign it cost what it may, — will, will resign it, if it can only be enjoyed at the risk of your future peace.

I had many things to say to you, — about *Musäus* and all that; but I must wait till another opportunity. At present I scarcely know what I am about.

Ever affectionately yours,

JANE B. WELSH.

LETTER 70

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

KINNAIRD HOUSE, 18th September, 1823.

MY DEAR JANE, — If I were not a fool of some standing, I should not have vexed you on this occasion, or given you this fresh opportunity of testifying how true is the affection which you bear me. Your Letter has set me a-thinking about matters which, with my accustomed heedlessness, I was letting take their course without accurate investigation, tho' conscious that a right understanding of them was of vital importance to both of us. I honour your wisdom and decision: you have put our concerns *on the very footing where I wished them to stand.* So be of good cheer, for no harm is done.

When I placed the management of our intercourse and whatever mutual interests we had or might have, entirely at your own disposal, making you sole queen and arbitress of the "commonweal," I stipulated for myself as much freedom of speech as you could conveniently grant, leaving to you an unbounded power of acting, then and in all time coming. It is to the terms of this *compact* that I still adhere in their widest acceptation. I know very well you will never be my wife. Never! Never! — I never believed it above five minutes at a time all my days. "'T is all one as I should love a bright particular star, and think to wed it."[1] My fancy can form scenes, indeed, which with you to share them were worthy of a place in the heaven above; but there are items wanting, without which all these blessings were a curse, and which not your consent (if that were ever to be dreamed of) nor any influence of man can assure me of realizing. Such illusions do in truth haunt me, nor am I very sedulous to banish them. The harsh hand of Time will do it speedily enough without help of mine, and leave no truth behind that will ever give me half the pleasure. I grant it is absurd, and might be more than absurd, to utter them so freely: but what then? They give a momentary pleasure to myself, and do harm to no one. Strip life of all its baseless hopes and beautiful chimeras; it seems to me there would be little left worth having.

Thus then it stands: You love me as a sister, and will not wed; I love you in all possible senses of

[1] ". . . It were all one
That I should love a bright particular star,
And think to wed it."
"All's Well that Ends Well," Act i, sc. 1.

the word, and will not wed, any more than you. Does this reassure you? If so, let us return to our old position: let me continue writing what comes into my head, and do you continue acting now or forever after just as you judge best. I seek no engagement, I will make none. By God's blessing, I will love you with all my heart and all my soul, while the blood continues warm within me; I will reverence you as the fairest living emblem of all that is most exalted and engaging in my conceptions of human nature; I will help you according to my slender power, and stand by you closer than a brother: but these feelings are entertained for myself alone; let them be their own reward, or go unrewarded — that is *my* concern. So long as you have charity to hear me talk about affections that must end in nothingness, and plans which seem destined to be all abortive, I will speak and listen; when you tire of this, when you marry, or cast me off in any of the thousand ways that fortune is ever offering, I shall of course cease to correspond with you, I shall cease to love Mrs. ——, but not Jane Welsh; the image she will have left in my mind I shall always love, for even this tho' the original is gone forever, will still have more reality than mere fantasies that would replace it. In all this I see no blame; and if there were, I cannot help it. Had it pleased Providence to plant some other standard of excellence in me, or make you different from what you are, then I should have felt and acted otherwise: but as it is, I am no free agent. For the rest, do not fear the consequence so far as I am concerned. My heart is too old by almost half a score of years, and made of sterner stuff than to break in junctures of that kind. Had it not been

harder than the nether millstone it must have shivered into fragments very long ago. I have no idea of dying in the Arcadian shepherd style, for the disappointment of hopes which I never seriously entertained, or had no right to entertain seriously.

Now, in the name of the ever blessed Trinity, have I done with these preliminaries? Ass that I was in forcing you to ask them! I confess it grieves me to address you in this cold formal style, as if writing to my Tailor for a suit of clothes, and directing him where to cut and where to spare; not to my own best Jane, the friend of my soul, from whom I have no secrets or separate interests, and whom I love because she has no secrets from me. Let us forget it altogether, and be as we were! If you *will* part with me, do it; but not for *my* sake! For my sake, I call God to witness, you never shall. Again I say, let us forget it utterly, forever and ever!

These woful explanations I judged it right to send without a moment's delay: your comfort seemed to be concerned in their being given you instantly. You must not count this as *any Letter* or your last as any: but write to me again in your own careless style, *about Musäus and all that*, just as if this thing had never happened. I long to be again introduced to your home at Haddington, to share in all your tasks and difficulties, to cherish your fainting hopes, and tell you a thousand times without stint or fear of reproof that you are dearer to me than aught in life, and that united we will conquer every difficulty, and be glorious characters —if it so please the Fates.

This last proviso seems a needful one for me at present, tho' in your case I esteem it little. I

appear to be fast going to the devil here; my health is getting worse every week; I sleep at the easy rate of three or four hours per night, and feel throughout the day in the most beatific humour! If it had not been that the people are kind to me as if I were their son, I had been gone ere now. They design staying here all Winter: I will try it another month; and if without improvement, I mount the horse Bardolph, and turn my face back again to the plain country. I was looking out, while there, in the valley of Milk,[1] for some cottage among trees, beside the still waters; some bright little place, with a stable behind it, a garden and a rood of green, — where I might fairly commence housekeeping, and the writing of books! They laughed at me, and said it was a joke. Well! I swear it is a lovely world this, after all. What a pity that we had not *five* score years and ten of it!

Meanwhile I go on with Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister:* a book which I love not, and which I am sure will never sell, but which I am determined to print and finish. There are touches of the very highest and most ethereal genius in it; but diluted with floods of insipidity, which even *I* would not have written for the world. I sit down to it every night at six, with the ferocity of a hyæna; and in spite of all obstructions my keep-lesson is more than half thro' the first volume, and travelling over poetry and prose, slowly but surely to the end. Some of the poetry is very bad, some of it rather good. The following is mediocre — the worst kind!

> Who never ate his bread in sorrow,
> Who never spent the darksome hours
> Weeping and watching for the morrow,
> He knows you not, ye gloomy Powers.

[1] Name of a small river in Annandale.

To Earth, the weary Earth, ye bring us,
To guilt ye let us heedless go,
Then leave repentance fierce to wring us:
A moment's guilt, an age of woe![1]

And now, my own best Jane, before leaving you, what more have I to ask? That you would love me forever, in any way, on any terms you please; that you continue while we both live to make me the confidant of all your sorrows and enjoyments great and small; and above all that you would find me means of doing you some essential service — something that might make our intercourse and affection more than a pleasing dream, when God shall see meet to put an end to it forever. Shew me, O shew me how I may benefit you. . . . Write to me *instantly*, to "reassure *me*." Tell me all things that concern you — *all things*. God bless you my Dearest! Do write me as you like, I am ever yours with all my soul! —

T. Carlyle.

This will be at Haddington on Sunday-morning: I know you will not keep me waiting. Write as of old *de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis* [about all things and some others]. Have you actually begun *The tales?* How do you like them? Will they do?

Have you arranged any hours for your studies? Do the gossips interfere with you? Are you happy? *Are you?* Tell me *every thing:* I am your Brother, and more than fifty brothers, to the end of time. Farewell! Be good and diligent and fear not.

[1] "Meister's Apprenticeship," Bk. ii. ch. 13.

Letter 71

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

Kinnaird House, 12th October, 1823.

My dear Jane, — Had you seen me last Tuesday, it would have paid you for the trouble of writing that delightful Letter[1] to me, and almost made you vow to write more liberally than ever. Your Letters are always "like dew on the mown grass"[2] to my heart; and the last was doubly welcome. The former one had cast such a cloud over me, and given rise to so many unpleasant speculations, that I waited with extreme anxiety to hear from you again. Often, often, did I watch the "ship of the desert," our old grey Postman, moving upon the lawn every alternate day, yet bringing not a word of tidings from Jane. But I held myself in patience; and patience had at length its rich reward. No! my Dearest, I do not think you will forget me; I were very miserable if I thought so. Oh let us never dream about forgetting; it would be little less than impious to renounce this heavenly feeling that unites us. Has not a kind Providence created us for one another? Have we not found each other? And might not both of us go round the Planet seeking vainly for a heart we could love so well? It appears to me that I have found in you what all enthusiasts long for, another and a nobler self: in looking at your character I

[1] This Letter has not been preserved.

[2] Blumine's words fell on the ears of Teufelsdröckh "like dew on thirsty grass." — "Sartor Resartus," Bk. ii. ch. 5. "Like rain on the mown grass" occurs in Psalm 72, verse 6.

seem to behold the image of my own, beautified in all its lineaments, exalted, transfigured, invested with a thousand charms; the *ideal beauty* of my mind, which I could almost worship, if I had not dared to love it. Let us never mind the caprices of Fortune; the future may take its course: our souls are linked together by the holiest ties; and what on earth shall part us? For myself, I am determined, whatever it may lead to, that I will love you more and more every day I live. What else can I do? This affection which I bear you is the most precious feeling of my nature, it enlivens and inflames all that is worthiest in my soul; it gilds my horizon with visions of hope more glorious than belong to this lower world. The idea of Jane, my noble Jane, illuminates and cheers the desolation of my thoughts as with the light of a summer's dawn; without you all were bleak and sullen and desperate even now, and with you I feel as if I could stand against innumerable enemies. No! my Darling, we will never part! I trust we shall live to be the highest of earthly blessings to each other; and be happy in spite of all obstructions, for many glorious years. God grant it, or teach us to exist without it!

Your delay in writing has been but too well accounted for. I noticed your Grandfather's[1] death in the Papers; and anticipated all that you would feel. There is a strange mellowing influence in the mandate of that last gloomy messenger who "changeth our countenance and sendeth us away." The hardest and sternest spirit appears with an imploring and tender look to our reflexions when it has yielded to the stroke of death. Unkind feel-

[1] John Welsh, Dr. Welsh's father.

ings are forgotten, faults are cast into the shade, and love alone sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought hovers round the tombs of our friends. The idea that all my deformities shall be hid beneath the grass that covers me, and I shall live like a stainless being in the hearts of those that loved me, often of itself almost reconciles me to the inexorable law of Fate. With the hope of meeting in a brighter scene of existence, I look on Death as the most inestimable privilege of man. O God if we are *not* to meet there, if those that are gone from us are but a mockery and lost in everlasting nothingness, — wherefore hast Thou created us at all?

Had I known that you were sick, I had been wretched with a witness. How is it, my dearest Jane? Have you been sitting too closely at your books, and must I vex you by my prayers and entreaties again? I do conjure you to beware of excess in the article of study: a black experience gives me fearful right to do so. For my sake, if not for your own, be counselled in this matter. If you lose that priceless treasure of health, what will become of us both? I will never cease to plague you till you promise to pass three or four hours every day in mere recreation — two of them in the open air.

You are very good to feel so anxious about my sickness. I think I might find some better topic to entertain you with; yet it were unfriendly altogether to abstain from mentioning this most paltry one, in which my general happiness is so awfully involved. Do not vex yourself, my beloved Jane, with fears about my dying. Of this there is not the slightest danger. No one ever dies of such disorders; the real object of dread is that of dwindling by degrees

into a pitiful whining valetudinarian, which is far worse than death. . . . What a charming thing it would be to see me enrolled among that worthy body! But be of better hope: I am neither going to die, nor to be laid upon the shelf in that mean manner. I am far better since I wrote to you: I expect to keep improving till quite recovered. Neither you or I must leave the world *yet:* we have many thousand things to do, and to enjoy; our history is scarce begun. Do not fear, my best Jane, that I will neglect any precaution. The punishment indeed which follows close upon the smallest omission is your abundant security. I grieve to be obliged to spend so much thought and time, in studying for health, and riding, and regulating all my movements: but it is a necessary tax, sternly enforced, and I pay it punctually. What boots it to complain? I have sworn to conquer this wretched impediment too: address, dexterity and stubborn patience are the weapons I must fight it with; I have daily better hopes of coming off victorious. Oh! if it were but so; if you once saw me triumphant over all these miserable evils! If we were both hastening forward in that noblest career to which we are devoted; both, hand in hand, approaching that resplendent goal where all our wishes lie! Fear nothing, my heroic Jane; it *shall* yet be so; you shall yet be remembered among the ornaments of your sex and country, and I the happiest of all preceptors shall say proudly, she was *my* pupil, and it was thus I prophesied. Diligence I have told you a thousand times, will accomplish everything you aim at; and with that unquenchable ardour, for which I love you, tho' I often scold you for its excess, I hold it to be impossible that you should

relax in diligence. Blame not Nature, for making you ambitious: praise her rather for fixing your ambition on the worthiest of objects, and giving you strength to contemn the shallow prizes for which others in your state are striving. Ambition is a source of endless disquietude; but it is the parent of great and glorious actions. I declare I have often no hope of escaping the Bœotian existence into which increasing years and hard fortune force many an honest and once ardent man — except that there is a fund of bitterness and unrest within my heart, which would not let me sleep two days upon the softest bed which all the pomp and luxury of earth could spread for me. So likewise it is with you! I know you are unhappy, except when earnestly endeavouring in the great cause: and strange as it may seem I wish you to be unhappy in those cases; I should love you less, if you were less exalted in your tastes, less exclusively bent on the glorious things which will yet be your immortal crown. Go on, then, my Princess! Rest not, tire not! Your name shall yet be great upon the earth; and what is far more to the purpose, the aim of your existence will have been fulfilled.

Yet I confess it is a sorry task I have set you. I should not be in the least disposed to scold you, tho' I learned that you were sick of that Musäus. Translating is a weary business: the turning of a sentence gives no scope to the better faculties of the mind; it helps to still the conscience and that is all. Nevertheless you must proceed. Despise not these small beginnings: there was a time when Milton did not know his alphabet, and Rome was once a hamlet. Do tell me all about your difficulties, and your progress. Four pages a-day seem a very

fair allowance; in time you will do more. The only cause for greater speed is the time of going to press. The Bullers wish me to go with them in May down to Cornwall; it seems likely enough that I may do so. Oh! what multitudes of gloomy thoughts — forebodings and forecastings I have had! Provoking Enemy! You wish you were with me in the hermitage! Would you go? Not you — one foot's length, tho' it were to the happy valley of Prince Rasselas. But tho' I went to the North Pole, you should not have leave to cast me from your thoughts. . . . Judge if I long to see you, amid these perplexities! I was within an inch of bolting off to Haddington last Friday, when they all set out to see Loch Katrine, and could prevail on me to go no farther than Loch Tay. I absolutely cannot live thus estranged from you. Do contrive, if you love me, to let me behold your face, when I come next to Edinburgh. I must be down for a few days in November, perhaps also at Christmas: I pray you for Heaven's sake to be visible — to have all things smoothed, and to meet me in your own bewitching way. You are an angel of light, and will have mercy on me; you are also very cunning, and can effect anything you like. *Meister* is to be printed between March and May, when I must be beside you again. I will come galloping out to Haddington every other day, and talk with you, and plague you till your very heart is sore. Will *Musäus* be ready then? Will you have *Libussa* done, when I see you in November? Oh that I were beside you this moment — you should see, you wicked creature, if you could cheat me as you did that poor unfortunate "pug-faced Turk" that came to you *in search of happiness*. — Now tell me

about every thing that comes into your head, or in the very slightest concerns you; and tell me the first spare instant. I cannot exist without your Letters — at least I do not think I can. Write also without the smallest care; nonsense from *you* is the best of all. Do I not set you an example? Tell me how your studies are arranged, if you read any thing, if you feel contented and keep diligent — all, all I wish to know. Did you ever read so tedious a Letter? I am done at last. God bless you my own Darling!

I am yours forever,

T. Carlyle.

Meister was going on like steam-machinery, when a Letter from the Editor of the *London Magazine* put a stop to it in a day. He has actually printed that meanest *Life of Schiller*, and expects the other parts without delay. I have idled for a week, as is my custom, when changing employment. I expect to have the business done when we meet. It can scarcely be worse than the first portion, which I have just now read with a most "vinegar aspect." It is generally *very* bad — the best is barely tolerable.

So you have seen the mighty Orator[1] and his "For Judgment, &c"! Tell me, tell me, about him and it, next time. Tomorrow, unless the day is bad, I am going out to meet him at Dundee or Perth, on Wednesday after he is married. His book is a gigantic monster!

[1] Edward Irving went to Haddington to preach on the Sunday before his marriage. — "Life of Edward Irving," i. 177.

Letter 72

Miss Welsh to T. Carlyle, Kinnaird House

Haddington, Tuesday, '14th Oct., 1823.'

Dearest Friend, — I am almost out of my wits with joy. I think, in my life, I was never so glad before. Such a future is before us! I cannot wait for your Letter any longer: my happiness is incomplete while you do not partake it. You and I are going to London! You and I! We are to live a whole Summer beside each other, and beside the one whom next to each other we love most.[1] We are to see such magnificence of Art as we have never seen and to get acquainted with such excellence of men and women as we have never known; in short, we are to lead, for three months, the happiest, happiest life that my imagination hath ever conceived.[2] In the same house for months, together in our occupations together in our amusements — always together! No duties to interfere with the duty of loving each other; no pitiful restraints to vex our happy intercourse. Delightful prospect! O! that it may not fade from us ere we reach it! Surely the Almighty's Self hath put it into the heart of our Friend! Surely it is not designed that it shall miscarry! Our Friend

[1] Edward Irving.

[2] This alone would go far to prove that the story of Miss Welsh's alleged love of Edward Irving and disappointment or "losing him," is one of the many myths connected with her history. If she had ever been seriously in love with Irving would she have shown such joy at the prospect of visiting him for three months, knowing that she would have for her hostess Isabella Martin, her successful rival?

is determined that you shall come, and my Mother is willing that I should go; and she is not to be left alone; she designs to pass the next Summer where she passed the last,[1] and where she is quite independent of my company. I foresee no cause why it should fail with me; and I am almost sure it will not fail with you. You will go, if for no other reason, because your own Jane desires it. Will you not? Need I doubt it? I know you love me. I know the noblest heart in Britain loves me.

How comes it that I have such a Friend as you? that I deceive you without seeking to deceive you? I am so different from my idea in your mind! Stript of the veil of poetry which your imagination spreads around me, I am so undeserving of your love! But I *shall* deserve it, *shall* be a noble woman, if efforts of mine can make me so. This Summer in London will make a new creature of me: I shall set myself, with my whole soul, to perfect my life and character through the counsel and example of my two Friends. I shall be happy; and the happy are always disposed to be good, are they not?

I did injustice to Edward Irving in supposing he had forgotten us. He loves us still — better than many hundreds of his other Friends. If you can bear with "The Lord" and Mrs. Montagu, you will have great delight in his visit. Shall I like his Wife?

Here is your Letter[2] come! I had given up hope of having it today. O! there is something in these Letters of yours so delightful, so overwhelming! Do you know I cannot read them without "tearing" (as my Aunt Mrs. Robert calls it), and it is not slight emotion that can make me weep.

[1] Templand, Thornhill. [2] No. 71.

Cornwall! Will you go to Cornwall? and just in May! Setting your happiness out of the question, is it not more for your advantage to go to London? Barry Cornwall[1] made a thousand pounds the first year he was there, and you have ten times the genius of Barry Cornwall. But do not be swayed by me: do as you like, and as you think best; only tell me which way you decide. — I think we may meet in November. At present I know of nothing to prevent us; but I do not look forward to having you with me *here*, with the same delight as to having you with me in London. Here there are so many considerations to distract me from the full enjoyment of your society; *there* we should be all for each other. — Cornwall! will you go to Cornwall?

I wish you were through with *Meister*. I would rather have you working the precious mines of your own heart and soul, than drudging for Goethe tho' a princely Master. If we are in London together, we shall arrange some plan of employment far finer than translating Fairy Tales, or even *Wilhelm Meister*. Nevertheless, this employment is not without its reward. I am very desirous that you should see the stuff I am making. You might set me on a better plan; for I am very sure I am working on a wrong one. I have no notion how far the original form of expression should be preserved in a translation, or how far I may alter it according to my idea of a good style. The consequence is that every sentence of my translation looks detached from the rest, and constructed in a different manner. Do you understand what I mean?

There is not the smallest chance of my injuring my health by over-study: I should not have leave

[1] B. W. Procter, Mrs. Montagu's son-in-law.

EDWARD IRVING

to destroy myself in that way, tho' I were willing. As long as the profession of Callers continues to exist, and as long as perishable silks and muslins continue to be worn, and as long as tea-parties and dinner-parties continue to be frequented, and as long as I have neither a great deal of money, nor a great deal of my own will, — I shall have idle business enough to keep me from too hard study. My sickness was caused by bile: and my bile was caused by annoyance, and my annoyance was caused by that unfortunate Youth who persuaded me he was going to die in good earnest. But I expect he will live after all; and I do not intend to be bilious again, — unless I am prevented from going to London. I have got the Orator's portrait — so like him, and so handsome! I design to copy it for you as soon as I get time; but at present I have a great deal of prose business on my hands: I have three pairs of silk stockings to darn; two muslin caps to make; two chessboards to paint; the Memoirs of a Missionary to read; and, worst of all, a most distressing blockhead of a girl to inspire with Geography.

Mr. Irving spoke of spending a week with you at Dunkeld; and then carrying you with him on his marriage jaunt.[1] He likes you well. Tell me how he gets on with a Wife; it must be very laughable.

Yours forever and ever,

JANE B. WELSH.

[1] Irving was married at Kirkcaldy on Monday the 13th of October, 1823. The bride was Miss Isabella Martin (daughter of the Rev. John Martin) to whom Irving had been engaged for eleven years. Carlyle did accompany the young couple, for two or three days, on their marriage jaunt. — See "Reminiscences," ii. 109–13.

Letter 73

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

Kinnaird House, 22nd October, 1823.

My dear Jane, — I had brought out this sheet last night, with intent to enjoy your company for an hour by means of it, when my conscience spoke up and told me it was shameful to waste your time and mine in such unprofitable tho' delightful reveries; that "Schiller's Life" was not *begun*, and to tell you that I was still in the bonds of idleness would but provoke your sorrow and contempt. In consequence of this sagacious admonition, I actually shoved in the little papers and took out the large ones; I commenced that unheard of enterprise, toiled at it till my eyes fell together; and tho' out of extreme dulness my advance was scarce perceptible, I make that achievement, of half a blotted page, the pretext of scribbling to you this evening without let or hindrance. You are more to me than all the Schillers of the Earth: I turn to you in all my hopes and undertakings, and have no pleasure in the world like that of talking to you.

What a blessed vision is this which my own beloved Jane contemplates for us two! Three months beside each other — three months employed in gathering knowledge, seeing wonders, interchanging all our thoughts — together, never parted by business or by ceremony — delighted with the world and with each other — you growing in improvement, I showing you by word and deeds a thousand times a-day that I loved you more than anything beneath the sky! This, I declare, were a prospect, which, could it be realized, might almost turn one's

head with happiness. Three months spent in such pure felicity would contain more heart-felt joy than many a lengthened life, and might make a man surrender all the hopes of more distant years for the sake of so much present satisfaction. But alas! alas! there is clay in all things that dwell upon this nether Earth. I have reflected on this project in various moods; I have seen the great Divine and studied him; the sunshine of your Letter is freckled with a thousand clouds. As yet I can decide nothing; nor will I, till we meet and talk two days together: you shall have all my reasons and exposures; and then *you shall decide yourself.* We have but one interest in this as in all things.

But whether I go or stay, there appears to me abundance of inducement to take *you* thither. Irving contemplates I know not what advantage from submitting you to the example and kindly influences of this seraphic Mrs. Montagu, for the whole of which I would not give three straws: I already know this eternal Mrs. Montagu; take some two or three thousand a-year, a graceful demeanour, a kind disposition, and a boundless admiration of His Reverence, I could bet that these are all the leading features of that terrestrial angel: and I run no risk of flattering when I say that your character neither will nor should assume another form from *hers.* I rather incline to think she will have more instruction to get than to give from the proposed conjunction. But independently of such chimerical advantages, the benefits of this journey do really seem considerable. You will see new forms of life, you will converse with cultivated men, you may gather much insight into character and manners, and what is equally desirable, into the nature and

extent of your own powers and the best mode of turning them to use. Not that I think this essential: patient study, constant, long-continued, earnest endeavours will bring forth your genius in its native brightness without this fostering, and nothing else will, even with it. Still it cannot fail to help, and therefore has a certain value. Another thing I look to is the happiness which you may realise along with these improvements. Storing your mind with so many novelties, some of them so instructive, you cannot fail of being comfortable. Edward Irving you know as well as I: with all his unspeakable absurdities and affectations he has the warmest and most beneficent heart of any man I ever saw. He loves you as a sister, and will treat you as one. His Wife you will hardly like, but neither can you well dislike her. She *is* unbeautiful; has no enthusiasm, and few ideas that are not prosaic or conceited: but she possesses I believe many household virtues; she loves her Husband and will love his friends. On the whole, you must go. I will escort you thither in the month of May; and if I cannot stay with you, I will return and bring you back in safety to your Mother's hearth, whenever you grow tired. It will grieve me deeply if we determine that I am not to abide with you; the home of my mind is where you are; would that my bodily home were there too! But I shall live in hope that future days will use us better; that we shall not leave the world without tasting in more unfettered intercourse the blessedness of this affection which makes us one. Yes, my darling Jane! I feel as if there were something sacred in the love I bear you; as if Providence could not mean that this last streak of heavenly brightness should fade away in vain from my tem-

pestuous sky. I have told you we were made for each other's happiness, ordained for one another from the beginning of time. Let mutual faith and devotedness and true honour be our constant guides: if they conduct us to happiness, such as Earth has seldom witnessed or mortal heart enjoyed, our part will be thankfulness to the Beneficent Creator, and love stronger than death to one another through all the dark vicissitudes of our being: if not, *we* cannot help it, the blame will not be ours.

Irving and I spoke about this project of his and my share in it; but we could come to no conclusion. He figured out purposes of unspeakable profit to me, which when strictly examined all melted into empty air. He seemed to think that if set down on London streets some strange development of genius would take place in me, that by conversing with Coleridge and the Opium-eater, I should find out new channels for speculation, and soon learn to speak with tongues. There is but a very small degree of truth in all this. Of genius (bless the mark!) I never imagined in the most lofty humours that I possessed beyond the smallest perceptible fraction; and this fraction be it little or less can only be turned to account by rigid and stern perseverance thro' long years of labour, in London or any other spot in the Universe. With a scanty modicum of health, a little freedom from the low perplexities of vulgar life, with friends and peace, I might do better; but these are not to be found by travelling towards any quarter of the compass that I know of; so we must try what can be done with our present very short allowance of them. Untiring perseverance, stubborn effort is the remedy: help cometh not from the hills or valleys; my

own poor arm, weak and shackled as it is, must work out my deliverance, or I am forever captive and in bonds. Irving said I had none to love or reverence in Scotland. Kind, simple Irving! I did not tell him of the hearts in Scotland that I will love till my own has ceased to feel; of *her*,[1] whose warm and pure and generous affection I would not exchange for the maudlin sympathy of all the peers and peeresses and prim saints and hypochondriacal old women of either sex in the creation. I told him that love concentered on a few objects or a single one was like a river flowing within its appointed banks, calm, clear, rejoicing in its course; diffused over many it was like that river spread abroad upon a province, stagnant, shallow, cold and profitless. He puckered up his face into various furrowy peaks at this remark, and talked about the Devil and universal benevolence, reproving me withal because I ventured to laugh at the pretensions of the Devil.

On the whole our Friend's mind seems to have improved but little since he left us. He is full as ever of a certain hearty unrefined good-will, for which I honour him as I have always done: his faculties also have been quickened in the hot-bed of Hatton Garden, but affectation and vanity have grown up as rankly as other worthier products. It does me ill to see a strong and generous spirit distorting itself into a thousand foolish shapes; putting wilfully on the fetters of a thousand prejudices, very weak tho' very sanctified; dwindling with its own consent from a true and manly figure into some-

[1] Mr. Froude, citing this sentence, suppresses the two words "of *her*," with disastrous effect on Carlyle's meaning. — See "Life," i. 208.

thing far too like a canting preacher of powerful sermons. He mistakes too: this popularity is different from fame. The fame of a genuine man of letters is like the radiance of another star added to the galaxy of intellect to shine there for many ages; the popularity of a pulpit orator is like a tar-barrel set up in the middle of the street to blaze with a fierce but very tarnished flame, for a few hours, and then go out in a cloud of sparkles and thick smoke offensive to the lungs and noses of the whole neighbourhood. Our Friend must order matters otherwise. Unless he look to it, he bids fair for becoming a turgid rather than a grand character; a kind of theological braggadocio, an enlarged edition of the Revd. Rowland Hill, but no great man, more than I or any other of the King's liege subjects. However, as the preachers say, "I hope better things, tho' I thus speak." I expect something from the prudence of his Wife; more from the changes of fortune that await him. There is a strong current of honest manly affection and wholesome feeling running beneath all this sorry scum; perhaps a clearance will take place in due time. I love the man with all his nonsense, I was *wae* to part with him. If he will keep you happy for three months, I shall forgive him everything.

In the meantime, you will stick close to the task that is before you. *We creep before walking*, the adage says; and so it shall be with Jane and me. Never falter, my own heroic Jane; you have chosen the better part, and all will turn out as it should. Glorious employments, heavenly days are yet before us. Your mind shall yet attain its full stature, be admired of all the world, and loved by me forever as the life-blood of my own. —

These difficulties in Musäus I easily understand: do not let them scare you. Never mind preserving the figure of his style, there is no peculiar beauty in it. Alter everything according to your own notions; cut sentences into two; join two together; turn them inside out, just as seems good to you. I think you would find it advisable to *read over three or four times* the passage you mean to work on for the day; to make up your mind about the difficulties, and impress the whole upon your mind, before putting pen to paper: then the words will flow as smooth as oil. Tell me everything about this, and all and sundry. All! all! I am never satiated with hearing my *other self*.[1]

What of this unhappy Youth? My feelings towards him will soon be mingled largely with contempt and anger unless he cease to tease you with his sorrows. Why does he not forbear to see you altogether? I pray you for all sakes not to mind him or get sick again. It is pitiful in the man to act thus: but what will not disappointed affection drive one to? Tell me how it is. What length are you got with *Libussa?* Do you read anything? Will you not finish Gibbon? Brother Jonathan will be in Edinburgh shortly; and proud to furnish you with any book you want. I still hope to see you in November; I will set out when this miserable "Life" is completed. Look that you be good and diligent and *happy*, and write to me every blessed week. O that November were here, and the Highland hills behind me, and I sitting by my own

[1] "What next I bring shall please thee, be assured,
Thy likeness, thy fit help, thy other self,
Thy wish exactly to thy heart's desire."
"Paradise Lost," viii. 449–51.

beloved Jane, telling all and hearing all! God bless you my Dearest. You will write to me *immediately?*

I am yours forever,

TH: CARLYLE.

LETTER 74

Miss Welsh to T. Carlyle, Kinnaird House

HADDINGTON, Wednesday, '12th November, 1823.'

DEAREST FRIEND, — Instead of wondering that I have not written sooner, you may bless your stars that I am able to write to you *now*. I have been nearer heaven, since you heard from me, than I wish to be again for some two score years[1] to come. About two weeks ago, I sallied forth with my Mother to a confounded tea-party, one very rainy evening; and was tempted of the Devil to leave my bonnet behind, for fear of spoiling the arrangement of my hair. The consequence was that both of us were attacked with furious colds from which I was the greater sufferer, as I richly deserved to be. One day in particular I was so ill that I believed I should not live; and those about me seemed to be much of the same opinion. Poor little Dr. Fyffe! his hand shook so when he felt my pulse! I am sure it was twenty beats quicker for his panic. However, the thread of my life was not yet spun. I fell asleep revolving last testaments and other pathetic matters; and when I awoke I was as free from pain as ever I was in my life. And now I am quite recovered,

[1] Two score years after this (Autumn, 1863), Mrs. Carlyle was dangerously hurt in a street accident in London. She never altogether recovered from its effects. — See "Reminiscences," i. 210.

except for a slight cough, attended with no inconvenience but that of obliging me to wear a cap (a proper punishment for my fit of vanity). Moreover I do not mean to allege indisposition as my excuse for a *fortnight's* silence. As far as my health is concerned, I have been able enough to write for these last ten days; but the house, as usual, has been full of people, and I deemed it advisable to employ the few minutes I could rescue from the wreck of my time, towards the performance of my task, rather than in vexing you with the obstacles in the way of my well-doing. The last of our visitors is gone this morning, and (God willing) I shall have a respite till the end of next week when we expect a new invasion. My Uncle George is about to marry, and purposes to afflict us with himself and his wedding party for as long as suits their convenience. I daresay you think me a most inhospitable person; but really I have cause to quarrel with some of the visits that are made us, knowing their motives as I cannot but do.

So you are not to go to London. I am sure you are not, without hearing a word more on the subject. The reasons that make you hesitate, with me must be conclusive. It was abundantly silly of me ever to expect that the project could take effect. It was far too like Paradise, for the world we live in. They say "experience teacheth fools wisdom." Assuredly then I am no fool, for it has taught me no such thing. I believed that you and I were to spend three months beside each other in London, as firmly as if I had never been disappointed in my life before. And yet it has been ever thus; ever my beautiful prospects have withered like the Gardens of Adonis almost the instant they appeared. I wish it had not been

put into my head that you were to accompany me: I might then have enjoyed the visit sufficiently without you; but now I do not care whether I go or stay, so that you are not there. But indeed unless our Friend doth greatly amend his ways, there is little likelihood of my seeking happiness under his roof either with or without you. He has not written me a single line since he was here, for all the lecture I gave him on the subject, and for all his promises of good behaviour in time to come. I do not understand him; sometimes I think he loves me almost half as well as you do; and then again that I am nothing to him at all.

The Fates are against *Libussa:* I had determined to have it all nicely written out before you came; but what with ill-health and one annoyance and another, there is almost nothing of it done. The first translation I made was so bad and so illegible that I threw it away, and commenced another. I am really a very worthless concern: two and twenty, and have done nothing that entitles me to hope for a higher destiny than marrying and making puddings.

You will not be able to read what I have written, — and no matter. You must know I was mortal drunk yesterday afternoon; and neither my hand nor my head are very steady yet. I had thought proper to faint, and they made me swallow three tumblers of brandy and water for a remedy.

Write soon, and tell me when you are likely to be in Edinburgh. — What of *Meister* and *Schiller?* Oh! for *your* head!

Your affectionate friend,

Jane B. Welsh.

Letter 75

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

Kinnaird House, 13th November, 1823.

My dearest Jane, — Your Letter which I received this moment, has distressed me very much. It is needless to say that I felt impatient and unhappy at your silence: day or night, more or less immediately, your image is ever present with me; and uncertainty is in such cases always the parent of uneasiness. It struck me once or twice that you might be ill; but I thought it foolish to entertain such black imaginations, most probably the mere result of my own unquiet and too forecasting mind. Alas! alas! there was no imagination here; you have been sick, and it is too plain that you are still sick. To think that *you* should be oppressed with bodily disease, that the pure sanctuary of your being should be darkened and deformed by the continual intrusion of material pain — I declare it is enough to make me utterly desperate. Oh! I know it, for six long miserable years I have known it: it is the most frightful sentence which Heaven in its wrath can pass upon a mortal. And, Good God! if you should die, and leave me destitute and lonely in this world, which your presence almost alone still paints for me with some colours of beauty and hope! O Jane! if my happiness is dear to you, as I know it is, you will be doubly careful of your precious health. Do, I conjure you for my sake, make this your first and most essential study. Should it not be so? If anything befall you, what are we both?

But why should I dwell on this dark side of the picture? Your Mother will nurse you, and force

you to take care of yourself; you will be quite well; I trust in God you will. As for the *cap*, I do not mind it: you had on a cap the first time I saw you, and nothing could become you better.[1] You were the loveliest creature! I shall never forget that Summer's evening while I exist.

In your Letters for a long time I have noticed something like a tone of subdued distress, a kind of melancholy, which while it makes me love you more tenderly, convinces me too clearly that you are not happy. My beloved Jane, you must strive against these things; you must not take the business of life so heavily upon you. I am not for preaching patience: it is a virtue of which neither you nor I were born to make successful profession. We are restless, sleepless creatures, whose enjoyment lies in the very struggle for enjoyment. It is for your discontent, in circumstances where so many of your sex would think themselves supremely happy, that I love and honour you. Let it be the incitement to strenuous enterprise: but do not give way to despondency, or fret yourself with regrets. I have told you often that your longings and efforts would not be in vain: every day I see new reason to repeat the prophecy. Your very diffidence is to me fresh evidence of the generous power that lies in the faculties of your heart and head. "Genius," says Schiller,[2] "is ever a secret to itself." So it is, if my experience of men has taught me anything. Coleridge says he never

[1] The wearing of a cap rather suggests that the first meeting between Carlyle and Miss Welsh took place in the garden or garden-house at Haddington. This is not incompatible with what Carlyle has said in the "Reminiscences" (i. 146). It will be remembered that Teufelsdröckh first meets Blumine in the garden-house of her mansion. The coincidence is worth noticing.

[2] In his "Naive und sentimentalische Dichtung."

knew a youth of real talents that did not labour under bashfulness and disbelief in his own ability. I could *prove* all this to you, if I had room; but it is not necessary. A noble spirit you have in you, the noblest I have ever seen; with your unwearied eagerness, this *must* in time display itself in its full proportions; and is not that the great aim and object of your life? I tell you all must and shall be well. Yes, you *will* marry; but do something far more glorious than "make puddings"; you shall make immortal food for the souls of generous men in lands and ages that you have never seen and never can see. My Mother says "they that meaned at a gowden gown got aye the sleeve"; an honest proverb, and full of truth. Never despond my heroic Jane! Your path is full of difficulties, but have you not an immortal goal before you? Above all, my Darling, never cease to tell me *all* your sorrows real and imaginary. It is absolutely impossible that you should ever "vex" or "tire" me with the recital of these things. Nor can the disclosure of them ever lower you in my esteem, knowing as I do by dire experience how all these matters are. Betide you what may, successful or not successful in the high purposes that give a new splendour to your character, my esteem, my reverence and love remain with you unaltered — a love that is extending itself into the deepest sources of my nature, and becoming more and more commingled with whatever of happiness or dignity I look for in this world. This it seems to me is something for both of us: we cannot be *alone*, however it may be. What Fortune may determine concerning us I know not: but I know that our souls were fashioned for one another by the hand of Nature, I know that we love one

another, and that nothing but our own resolution can destroy that most delightful of sentiments.

I really wish much you would make up your mind to tell me *everything* that you wish and intend and dislike and fear. It appears to me, that if we once saw the whole case plainly before us, much might be done to remedy the evils you have to complain of. For I am not blind to the grievances with which your present situation is beset. You are among people whom you *cannot* sympathise with, who do not understand you, whose officious interference but makes worse what it means to remedy. Your intellectual progress is obstructed, and you have no aim in common with those about you, the success of which might be a compensation. I wish to Heaven you *were* my Sister — since it must be so. I would take you down to the Land's End with me; I would be your Teacher, your Guardian, you should be my Presiding Spirit, the cheerer of all my woes, the directress of all my concerns and actions. Oh! we would love one another till death, and care no jot about all the vulgar people in the solar system! But it is needless to talk of this; you are not my Sister, where you are thither I cannot come. Nevertheless, we love one another, and place no bounds to our mutual confidence. Let us unite our judgements, and see what *can* be done to redress these evils that obstruct and harass us. I myself am soon going to be next to frantic, unless I can arrange my destiny more according to my mind. We will! we *shall* get over these things: this disquietude that is in both of us assures me of it. "Love and friendship shall encircle our kindred souls,"[1] we shall both of us be happy and great in our day!

[1] Schiller.

I am coming down about this time three weeks, when we shall discuss all these affairs, growing more important to us every day. Pity that some angel would not descend and tell us what to do! Never mind this *Libussa:* you are taking far too much pains with it; consider it as the refreshment not the occupation of your mind, and you will prosper better in it. Do not dream of writing it twice over; printers can read anything; I will get it copied for you if need be. It is but the tottering of a mind that will yet soar. Will you have Doering's *Schiller* and write a Life of him for Brewster? Think of this.

My own miserable *Life* gets on drearily; the Second Part is not much more than half done! I am next to dead, every night at six, when I begin it; and two pages I reckon a feat extraordinary. Poor Devil! I wonder what is to become of me. *Goethe* has been dormant for five weeks. It *is* to be printed in February: I have stipulated so with these Bullers — for leave to be in Edinburgh till May. On the whole I will struggle forward, tho' at the rate of an inch per week, while there is a spark of life left within me; I will die if it must be so, still struggling forward.

I feel a considerable temptation to cut these Bullers. The place does nothing earthly for me but bring in £200 a-year, and without at all employing, it occupies at least three-fourths of my time. Woe is me that I cannot live on air! One thing I am resolved upon: it is to live no more under their roof, if February were here. Mrs. Buller has the secret of spending seven or eight thousand a-year with a *minimum* of comfort, more completely than any lady I ever saw. Extravagance and poorest parsimony,

splendour and meanness.—Your house in Haddington has not only ten times the real substantial means of enjoyment in it, but is even more genteel, than ours with all our efforts, and I should suppose about ten or twelve times the expense. If I were in Buller's place, I would swallow ratsbane! To roast out thirty years of his best beneath the burning sky of India, and come home to this! He is the most honest, patient good soul I ever saw.— But this is no concern of mine; farther than that having convinced myself that health can *never* be restored to me under Mrs. B.'s *ménage*, I have signified to them my purpose of withdrawing. This they struggled to oppose, invited me earnestly to suggest amendments, spoke in the most friendly terms, and told me that if I went to Cornwall, I should but have the eldest and best of my pupils to attend to, and *might live in a house of my own. Ad huc sub lite est* [it is yet undecided]. They expect me to go, I observe; but it still remains to be considered, whether for the sake of such a sum and five hours daily, I should move so far, and make so many changes. We will talk of this when I come down. Would you forget me if I went to Cornwall? This often strikes me to the heart. But I must not waste *all* my sheet, till I have told you the *message*, such as it is. There are two German books with you, I think; Jack is come in to Edinburgh and needs to give them in to the Library. They can be sent back to you immediately if you wish it. Will you transmit them to Jonathan as soon as convenient. His address is: Robertson's Lodgings, 35 Bristo Street. He will be proud to furnish you with any books you want. This too we must arrange.— Now remember, my own Jane, what reason I have to feel anxieties

about you, and *what* a case I shall be in unless you write to me without delay. O do write — I shall imagine you are dead — if you keep so long silent another time. If you cannot fill a sheet, give me half or quarter. Your fortune is mine — let me know it, whatever it is. Adieu, my heart's beloved! I am your own through life and death.

T. Carlyle.

Letter 76

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

35, Bristo Street, Saturday '29 November, 1823.'

My dearest Jane, — Your Letter[1] met me on my way hither; the old sack of a Postman gave it me out from his wallets, among the rocky defiles of the Tay. You are an angel to me, if there ever was one: such Letters are beyond what I deserved even to hope for.

The business now in hand is *when* am I to see you? I have a sharp-tempered horse that will carry me out and back, whenever you send me a *safe-conduct*. I have much, very much to say and hear; I feel almost afraid of this interview from which at the same time I expect so much delight. You must try to get it all settled rightly, and let me know as soon as possible. You are aware how wonderful a stock of patience I have; therefore you will not keep me waiting. I arrived last night, am to stay about a week, and have no engagement that I will not give to the winds for the sake of *ours*. Order me therefore according to your own good pleasure.

[1] This Letter has been lost.

It will be the cruellest thing your Mother ever did, if she make objections to our meeting. Two honest-meaning very respectable creatures that have scarce another friend on the face of the Earth! Nevertheless if she act *perversely*, it is ours to submit. Do not quarrel about this, my own best Jane! I will love you through all Eternity tho' I should never see you more. But we *will* meet before all is done; we will; I have sworn it a hundred times. If I did not think so, I should feel inclined to run *amuck* at this very instant! Therefore do you, *Lovely Damsel of the many Devices*, see to put your skill in force on this occasion; and manage matters with the dexterity you have always shewn; remembering how long, long it is since we met, and how much need there is that we meet soon. I shall wait with all the patience in the world for your news. Shall I hear from you on Monday? I know I shall, the first moment you have time.

I meant this Letter to have been of even more than usual length; and behold you can hardly gather one idea from it, or even make out the few scattered words that compose it. Stupid persons have been about [me] all the blessed day: I have only saved ten minutes (by escaping into another room) before the last of the coaches sets off. You will understand what I mean, and that is all we need. I care not what I write to you, you are my *other self*.

Here is the Orator's Trial [1] (a clever thing they

[1] A fictitious Trial of Edward Irving, published in pamphlet form (London, 1823). It is illustrated with several caricature portraits of Irving. Readers must not confuse this squib with the real Trial of Irving by the Presbytery at Annan in March, 1833, when he was formally deposed from the Presbyterian Church. — See Mrs. Oliphant's "Life of Edward Irving," i. 169; and ii. 339–53 (2d ed.).

say) to make you and your Mother laugh till bedtime. Did you ever see such faces? May the Devil take Irving's "intellect" and his "youth" both, for the trouble they have given you! He is one of the greatest Blockheads, with all his other qualities, that ever God made. But let the silly people say their say; their words break no bones, they pass, like the wind they are made of, leaving no trace behind. "Are *you* ill?" — Now write immediately, directing hither. Heaven grant that you send good news! God bless you my own best Jane!

I am yours forever,

TH. CARLYLE.

LETTER 77

Miss Welsh to T. Carlyle, 35 Bristo Street, Edinburgh

'HADDINGTON, 30 November, 1823.'

DEAREST FRIEND, — The dreaded communication is made, and there is no objection to our meeting. When I had read your Letter I told my Mother its purport, and asked her awkwardly enough if you might come. "*May he come!*" she said after me, with a portentous smile, "if *you* can answer that question, I suppose it is quite unnecessary that *I* should be consulted." What was her meaning think you? I declare, like God's power, she passeth all understanding. However it is understood that you are to come. So mount your Bucephalus on Friday morning (that it seems is the most *agreeable* day) and be here as soon as you and it like. You will stay till Sunday, at all events, and

longer if you can, and if my Mother *will*. God grant she may get into good humour by the end of the week. With all her kindheartedness she would put our Orator's "Roman Daughter" [1] herself in a most undutiful passion, now and then. I declare if it were not that I know she loves me in her heart, I should many a time be tempted to "bake me a bannock," [2] and set away to "*poos* my fortune" in distant parts. But she could not want me, tho' she thinks me a very worthless young lady. So I must stay where I am.

My dear wee Doctor [Fyffe] has been on another "weaver-shuttle" expedition to Moffat; and has fallen in with something like you on the top of a coach. He tells me you are very unwell. Why did you hide this from me? I shall have him to prescribe for you when you are here. I wish to God you were better.

The clock is striking five. — My love to your Brother. — Friday by twelve o'clock!

Yours forever,

JANE WELSH.

[1] "There is still spared to you one parent whose affection if it were capable of increase would be redoubled to replace that which is departed. If I could love my God as your Mother loveth you, the greatest part of my earthly anxieties were at an end. But too much perhaps of this. May your affection be returned with the ardour of the far-famed Roman daughter, and with the softness of a Christian child." — Ed. Irving to Miss Welsh, 5 June, 1821.

[2] A thick scone, or small loaf.

Letter 78

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

Kinnaird House, 22 December, 1823.

My dear Jane, — I have been in such a weak insipid humour ever since I left Edinburgh, that till now I could not determine to afflict you with my dulness. The Oxide of Mercury[1] and the devil and the storms of Winter and the ill-nature of my own heart are all against me: it requires a degree of philosophy scarcely inferior to that of Epictetus himself to keep from dying of the spleen. I hope it is better with you in Haddington; but here it is dreariness itself. There is a day of piercing frost, then a day of snow, then three days of sleety vapour; and then we begin our cycle as before. I declare it is quite tempting to go abroad: you wade to the ankles in half-melted snow, with a dismal fog overshadowing the whole universe, or a howling tempest of drift and snow and whirlwind coming roaring thro' the Pass of Killiecrankie, as if the very Genius of Winter were riding on the blast. Except Buller and me (condemned men)[2] no mortal stirs abroad: it is true you here and there meet with some ancient weatherbeaten smuggler beating up against

[1] One object of Carlyle's late visit to Edinburgh had been to consult an eminent doctor about his dyspeptic troubles. The advice given to Carlyle was, in brief: "Take mercury, and abstain from tobacco." This advice was faithfully followed, but it proved to be worse than useless. The weakening effects of the drug, the deprivation of the accustomed "generous weed," together with the prevalence of wretched weather, all conspired to cast a "dark brown shade" over the only portion of this Letter which has been preserved.

[2] Condemned to suffer the pangs of dyspepsia.

the storm, on the outside of his *garron*, with two kegs of whisky, and a truss of straw by way of saddle, — his face of a mahogany colour, and whiskers jingling with a load of frozen sleet; but it is *his* element, you cannot say he is *abroad*. Oh it is a delicious season of the year; and then the place affords so many special recreations! I read nonsensical books, being unable either to think or write; I walk to and fro, muffled up in a thick greatcoat, with galoshes and a huge hairy cap; I talk ineptitudes with the people, and *drive* away the time till February come, as best I may. It is essential to my comfort that I smother all sparkles of ambition within me: if I looked beyond the present quarter of a year, or attempted anything more than merely existing, I should be completely wretched. It appears to me that rest were well exchanged for fame at any time. What matters it that one is stupid and ignorant and void of genius, so one had but peace and rest, and could say to his soul: Soul take thine ease, thou hast goods laid up for many years! I maintain that you and I are far too ambitious: one of the first steps in our improvement will surely be the diminution of that feeling. If we are ever to be happy, it must be so.

I do not recollect that I ever thought more, or more anxiously, about you than since we parted last. It still seems to my alarmed imagination that the crisis of our fate is at hand, that we are to be dashed asunder by the strong arms of Destiny, and driven ere long into everlasting separation. In fact it is clear enough that things cannot stand as they are. For me, I have long looked on pitiful Misery as my companion for life; there is little hope of my recovering even health, and without this the sceptre

of the universe were not worth a pin. So I have laid my account with endurance and a perpetual train of despicable suffering — till the end — which is not very distant. But for you, with such advantages and such aims, it is infinitely harder that you are unhappy. My late visit has convinced me too well that this is the case with you: would that the remedy were equally plain! No, my dearest friend, you are not happy: indeed how could you be so? What communion has light with darkness; or you with the inane people your lot is cast among? You are encircled with drivelling and folly; nothing that your mind can relish or care for; companionless, tho' your heart is full of warm affections: you have sacrificed all for the sake of your improvement, yet you are obstructed almost stopped in your progress towards it. My dearest Jane! [*Rest of Letter a-missing.*][1]

Letter 79

Miss Welsh to T. Carlyle, Kinnaird House

Haddington, 30th December, '1823.'

My dear Friend, — You never sent me a Letter in your life that afforded me more satisfaction than your last. For a week I had been marvelling at your silence, and for the last two days of it I had been miserable outright. I do think there never was a brain so clever as mine in conceiving all possible calamities. One minute I fancied that I had lost your affection, — at least in

[1] It was probably in this incomplete Letter that Carlyle enclosed to Miss Welsh the little poem entitled "They Chide Thee," etc. — See Appendix A, No. 12.

part; and the conjecture looked likely enough, for you had seen me face to face, and must have found it no easy matter to recognise in my actual self the superexcellent creature you had been picturing me, among the hills of Perthshire. And then I regretted that you had come hither at all to be disturbed from an illusion so agreeable to us both. But frequently the consciousness of my true affection for you reassured me on this head: it was impossible that you would cease to love one who loved you so faithfully and so well. And the next minute I had fully persuaded myself that you were ill. God knows there was small comfort in that view of the matter: the idea that you were dying, perhaps actually dead, was like to drive me crazy altogether. Mercy! what an ass I am. The blue-devils, it turns out, was all that was the matter!

The Fates are against us my dearest Friend; this truth grows plainer and plainer every day. *You* however may fight it out to the end. You have a brave spirit in you, and nothing, — nothing but a premature death, — can prevent you being in the long run one of the brightest ornaments of the age we live in; of this I am very sure. But for *me*, I have not force of mind to struggle through. I "have no genius," I feel it. My ambition will be borne down at last by the difficulties that oppose its gratification. And when my ambition is no more, what good reason will there be that I should occupy any room in our Creator's Universe? Lord have mercy upon me! When I cease to be ambitious I am a ruined woman! I could not help smiling in bitterness of heart, when I found that your time had been spent since we parted, quite as unprofitably and unpleasantly as my own. You left me more than ever

bent on well-doing, more than ever prepared to kick to the Devil every obstacle that should withstand the lofty purposes of my will. In this proper mood I was set down to my books before you were a mile on the way to Edinburgh. For two days I went on briskly at the appointed rate; on the third I was taken ill, more seriously than I had been before; and almost ever since, I have been bundled up among blankets on a sofa, and constrained to follow Mrs. Montagu's divine prescription.[1] Oh, the thumping pain in my head, and the feverish listlessness of mind that I have endured for these last three weeks! I declare I was many times tempted to help myself to a dose of arsenic, when their detestable drugs and decoctions afforded me no relief.[2] But I am well now: better than I have

[1] To rest.

[2] That Miss Welsh was of unusually delicate organization and provided by nature with a poor constitution must be evident to all who read in these Letters her own accounts of her health. Neither of her parents was what could be called robust: her mother was an invalid for years, given up by all the doctors except her husband (see "Reminiscences," i. 149–50). Her father died at the early age of forty-four. In addition to that, Miss Welsh, as she herself tells us, was born in the seventh month, and it is well known that such children, if they survive at all, are generally seriously handicapped for life. This statement is borne out by high medical authority: "According to Bar, *eighty per cent* of those born so late as the twenty-eighth week die." ("Manual of Midwifery," T. Watts Eden, J. & A. Churchill, London, 1906). Mrs. Carlyle lived till well into her sixty-fifth year, reaching a greater age than either her father or her mother. This fact alone would seem to show that her life — especially the forty years of her married life — was not so hard and unhappy as some would fain have us believe. All the evidence worth naming goes to prove that she was far healthier and happier after her marriage than before it. The statement made by Carlyle's biographer, that Mrs. Carlyle's health was permanently broken

been for several months. I fell asleep one day last week, and for eight-and-forty hours I slept as soundly as the enchanted Princess in the Story-book. When I came to myself, I was quite another creature.

I mean to devote the remainder of this year to the recovery of my strength, and to set to work in good earnest on the first of January.

Thus *Rübezahl* and Gibbon remain *in statu quo*, and three weeks more of my time is passed away, leaving no rack behind. But tho' my illness has impeded my progress, it has materially mended my situation, and therefore I nothing regret it. When my Mother saw me so white-faced she quite forgot all my enormities, and showed a tenderness and solicitude for me, which I have not experienced from her for a great while. I flatter myself that chance has thus laid the foundation of a more agreeable relation between us in time to come. I assure you it shall not be my fault if I fail to conciliate her good will. To live without it, as I was living, would in a very short time break my heart. — Do not allude to this subject when you write, because I must not keep

by the (imaginary) hardships she endured at Craigenputtock, is not only unfounded but is the very reverse of the truth: her health improved at Craigenputtock so much that the weakening illnesses from which she habitually suffered, and which were the cause of her frequent headaches, entirely subsided, and she had the expectation of becoming a mother. In the summer of 1831 her sister-in-law Miss Jean Aitken staid with her during Carlyle's absence in London, and helped her to prepare a tiny wardrobe for the expected little new-comer. But the hardships of Mrs. Carlyle's journey to London, and in London, induced a relapse to her former condition. Just before she started on this trip to London Carlyle wrote to her, with anxious solicitude, these impressive and significant words: "Take every care of thyself, Wifekin: there is more than thy own that thou carriest with thee."

your Letters from her any longer. Tho' you recommended it to me to make concessions, I am afraid you will hardly thank me for making this one: but it must be so; I cannot help it without casting matters back to where they were. As long as there was no confidence in my Mother's treatment of me, it passed well enough. The secret which I made of your Letters, looked merely like retaliation; but at present the case is quite different; and such a reserve on my part would break very awkwardly in on my confidential conduct in other respects, and give rise to suspicions which it is neither for your credit nor mine that she should entertain. Besides after all, it cannot prove any hardship to you or me that my Mother should see your Letters, as long as she continues in this benign humour. It is not necessary that you should write under any restraint: she will understand you, — understand every thing, at present, just as I like. To convince you of this, I need only tell you that I read her your last Letter all except the part that related to herself (for skipping which I made a very bungling apology), and she found no fault with it. She even laughed heartily at your Mother's projected trip to Cornwall. And after that, what have we to fear? Indeed I should not have told you my intention at all; but have put it into execution without making any words about the matter, only that I dreaded lest, by alluding to herself, you might place me again in a very awkward predicament. — I cannot write another line. I never was so tired in my life. — God bless you, my dearest Friend!

Yours forever and ever,

Jane B. Welsh.

Letter 80

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

Kinnaird House, 8th January, 1824.

Ma bien Aimée! — I write to you in the greatest haste, rather than miss writing altogether. Owing to some infatuation, which I hardly pretend to account for, much less to excuse, I absolutely *could not* fix myself to any vigorous exertion of thought till within the last three days. I did nothing but read useless books, and dream, and gossip with Mrs. Buller about the literary men of the age, or with her Husband about "Hume's Philosophy," and Jeremy Bentham, and "the force of public opinion." Now *Schiller* is to be called for in a fortnight; and I am just about to burn the only three pages of it that are yet written. Judge then if I am hurried.

Who would have thought that you possessed such a melancholy gift of imagining? I conceived that I myself had been the only adept in that profitable science: but I now find that you are no whit inferior. Lost my affection? O Jane! that you were equally secure against all other losses! My affection for you is not grounded on vague and transient delusions, but on congruity of disposition, on respect for your qualities, and tender concern for your fate: it is calm and steadfast; and will not change, till you are tired of it, or I am become a very miserable creature. At all events we *will not* part so long as we can help it. I will correspond with you to the end — if your future Sovereign will permit so pleasant an arrangement; and if he will

not, he must be a churl undeserving the happiness of such a Wife. As for the amiable Mrs. C. that shall be, it is not likely that *she* will disturb us for several years yet.

I need not say that I rejoice to hear of the new facilities for study, and the general accession of comfort you have lately acquired. Are you still well? For God's sake take care of yourself: it is the most dreadful thing out of the Pit of Darkness, the only thing that can completely ruin you and make you miserable, to lose your health. One great point is to keep as free as possible from all disquieting thoughts; a prescription indeed easy to give, but difficult effectually to follow. There is no mastering of these vexations by open combat; the best way in general is to avoid them, to give them the slip by diligence or dissipation of any kind. But the misfortune of people such as we are, is that we can find no proper dissipation; the persons about us have other aims, other ideas; their conversation is not of the kind we seek; we reject it entirely, and choose rather to dwell in the solitude of our own chagrin than in the midst of such inane tho' comfortable follies. This I believe is altogether wrong; tho' few can at first perceive it to be so. One *should* have company — communion and fellowship with our kind — even if it were but with the drivellers of the earth. My dearest Jane! if you would avoid being wretched, never estrange yourself from the beaten ways of men: mix in their concerns, participate in their interests, imitate their common habits, however poor and mean. No one knows more bitterly than I the consequence of neglecting this. Observe it, be diligent, cherish honest thoughts, and with health and competence you will be happy.

Burton's precept in his *Anatomy of Melancholy* is, "Be not solitary, be not idle"; with my whole strength I repeat to you, "be not solitary, be not idle."[1]

You speak of the decay of ambition. I do truly believe that you never will be perfect as you should be till your ambition is considerably lessened. Fame is a pleasant thing to get, as all men, indeed all living creatures know: but I am persuaded that the love of it was never yet and never can be the moving principle of any genuinely great action.[2] This appears to me as certain as the fact of our existence. If I thought you were impelled towards Literature by no higher principle, I should feel very sorry: and as it is, I look forward with great hope of benefit to the mitigating influence of years, the flight of time, which is sure to diminish this feeling in you. For myself I declare I often feel that one hour of deep, deep *rest* were worth all the fame in the universe.

This, you observe, is nothing but the old song; and you do not value it a jot. I confess I do not love you less for your unbelief; tho' for the sake of your own happiness and true dignity I wish very much I could convince you. I would prove that literary fame, even when it can be gained in all its

[1] Dr. Johnson modified Burton's precept into, "If you are idle, be not solitary; if you are solitary, be not idle." — Johnson to Boswell, 27 Oct., 1779.

[2] In his "Reward of Virtue" the Younger Pliny wrote: "Sequi enim gloria, non appeti, debet: nec, si casu aliquo non sequatur, idcirco, quod gloriam meruit, minus pulchrum est." ("Fame ought to be the consequence, not the motive, of our actions: and though it should happen not to attend the worthy deed, yet it is by no means the less meritorious for having missed the applause it deserved.")

fulness, is by no means the most enviable thing for man or woman; that life has other far more solid, and I hesitate not to say, more noble enjoyments and attainments; that it forms a beautiful enhancement to these more general blessings, but that without them it is *worse* than nothing. Will you not believe this? I pray God that a more mild experience than usual may teach it you. But let me not weary you with sermons; you have enough for once. You know in your heart that it is a trembling anxiety for your happiness that prompts me, therefore you will not take it ill. I often wish I could live three calendar months beside you: it seems to me I could correct much, much in your philosophy of life, that I greatly fear may yet work you pain. One thing you should drive away from you: it is the excessive vehemence with which you regret your small proficiency and the flight of time. This is very natural, but erroneous. Life is not so short as that amounts to: I believe no literary man ever spent the *fiftieth part* of his time or attention upon Literature. Cowper was near his grand climacteric[1] before he began to write at all. Think what forty years of diligence will do, if you employ them well! I swear to you there is no danger: you want only a little experience to give you confidence in your own powers. You live at present shut out, absolutely shut out, from all communication with minds like your own: this is the greatest evil in your lot; it is this which I hope your journey to London will do much to remedy. You see the world as it were thro' a telescope: no wonder that you know not how to touch

[1] Climacterics are supposed critical stages in the life of man. They occur in multiples of the number seven: thirty-five, forty-nine, sixty-three, etc. Sixty-three is called the "grand climacteric."

it, or produce effect on it. All this, however, Time will remedy. *Exercise your own judgement*, consider, calculate calmly and solemnly what *is* best to be done in every emergency; do it steadfastly; I predict unflinchingly that Jane Welsh will yet be an honour to her sex and country. Only be patient and firm; and there is no danger. Be kind, obliging, good-natured to all about you, and diligent at your tasks, and never fear.

I am coming down to Edinburgh against the first of February, when *Meister* is to go to Press. Of course you will write to me within two weeks; for after that, my "whereabouts" is not determined. Will you? Then I send you the *Jungfrau*[1] from Edinburgh, with much "chirography." — Whether I go to Cornwall or not is uncertain. Brother Alick and I are talking about renting a farm by the still waters in the bottom of Annandale. I am to be sleeping partner; to have a horse and fit apartment, &c; Alick is to care for all the rest. This plan I know will not answer; but it pleases me for a moment. *Something* must be done for this miserable frame of mine: the want of health is almost driving me mad. — Adieu, my own Jane!

I am ever yours,
TH. CARLYLE.

Tell me carefully concerning *Rübezahl* and Gibbon (what a pair!) and all your other studies and pursuits. You must be very punctual and circumstantial. It is a great evil that we live so far asunder, and there is nothing but the pen to help it. *Are* you well? Are you happy? Poor Goethe, I ob-

[1] Schiller's "Jungfrau von Orleans" ("Maid of Orleans").

serve, is "dangerously sick." — Washington Irving, I now hope, is *not* dead.[1] Do you hear anything of it? Write soon — and be very good.

Letter 81

Miss Welsh to T. Carlyle, Kinnaird House

Edinburgh, 22 George Square,
21st January, '1824.'

My dear Friend, — I staid from Church on Sunday for the purpose of writing to you; rightly conjecturing that I should not have an hour to myself for some days to come. But after I had stirred the fire and mended my pen, and set myself down to my desk, I discovered to my great disappointment that there was not a morsel of writing paper in the house. What little things may spoil the finest projects!

We came hither on Monday morning, and ever since I have been kept in a continual bustle.

A change from pure air to smoke is to work miracles (they say) in restoring my health; and in the present state of affairs, I have not thought it politic to dispute the matter. So there is my new system of study thrown into confusion already! However I have brought a volume of Musäus along with me, and am in great hope that, as I shall be permitted to decline all racketing about on the plea of my recent illness, the period of our sojourn here may not be altogether "*sine linea.*"[2]

[1] A false report of Washington Irving's death was current at this time. He died on the 28th of November, 1859.

[2] *Nulla dies sine linea* (No day without a line), or in full: *Nulla dies abeat quin linea ducta supersit* (Let no day pass without

If you come down at the time you purposed, I shall most likely see you before I return to Haddington. But it does not matter much tho' you do not: we can converse with one another more "soul to soul" as we are, with the Forth between us, than if we were stuck up together in my frigid Cousin's[1] drawingroom.

On the whole I have been more diligent since the commencement of this new year. However I am not yet entirely quit of the bodily uneasiness, and restless listlessness of mind which has incapacitated me for any serious occupation for several months past. But as the causes[2] of the secret disquietude which has been harassing my thoughts and deeply undermining my health, are in a great measure removed, I expect in a short time to regain my usual ardour and activity. My Mother continues to use me kindly; and if Fortune had not played me another malicious trick, I should have enjoyed as perfect tranquillity for these last four weeks as my restless nature will admit of.

You must know I quarrelled with Dr. Fyffe a day or two after you left us. I had observed the workings of his little mind during your visit, with some feelings of contempt and displeasure; and his subsequent conduct completely ruined him in my esteem. Only think, the creature had the intolerable presumption to attempt to ridicule you to my very face! He had heard me express high admiration for decision of mind and proportionate contempt for the opposite quality; and so in the enviousness of his heart, he set about giving me a detail of your

some line being left behind it). Pliny associates this proverb with the great painter, Apelles.

[1] Eliza Stodart.

[2] The alleged unkindness of her mother.

proceedings at the George Inn, which was meant to show you off as the most irresolute, fickle-minded gentleman that ever fluctuated between half a dozen different opinions. Was there ever such daring impudence? However, I kept my temper and heard him to an end, with Job-like patience. When he thought proper to hold his tongue, satisfied (no doubt) that his masterly satire had entirely demolished your manly idea in my mind, I asked him, "Now Sir, if *my Friend*, knowing you to be possessed of my good opinion, had turned *his* talent of satire (which I assure you does not come short of yours, however much it may exceed it) to render you absurd and contemptible in my eyes, what would you have thought of him?" The creature ruffled up like a Bantam about to fight, and chattered with an astounding command of absurdity, about your impertinence in presuming to suppose him *drunk*. To which volley of nonsense I replied with a volley of female eloquence which (I have a notion) is tingling in his ears up to this hour. I am pretty certain I have not spoken so long or so warmly since the day that you and I were in quest of Lady Warrender. Mercy! what a delicious walk that was! I have laughed at the recollection of it many a time. But the M. D. had not the policy to give me the last word, like you; and we parted mutually incensed. And here I must part with him for the present, tho' all the important part of the story is to come. But my paper is almost filled, and so illegibly that to cross it would drive you crazy altogether. I have devoted so much of it to these most uninteresting particulars because they have led to the most serious consequences — consequences which might have involved the happiness of all

my life to come. — I shall explain in my next. — I cannot make sense of what I have written: consider that I am half-dead of fatigue and headache; and that *five* persons are conversing with me while I write. But I must not put off till tomorrow, for I know not what it may bring forth. Besides the fortnight is almost expired. — God bless you for considering my comfort, even at the cost of your own enjoyment. I shall repay you hereafter.

Address to me here.

Yours everlastingly,

JANE WELSH.

LETTER 82

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Edinburgh

KINNAIRD HOUSE, 25 January, 1824.

MY DEAREST JANE, — Last Friday I was once more gratified with the sight of your handwriting on the back of a Letter for me; a sight which never fails, even in my most lugubrious humours, to dispel the dark shadows from my mind, and replace them with images of happiness and hope. I enjoyed your Letter very much: you see I am anxious for another such. I confess I have no right to reply so soon; and tonight I ought to be minding other business: but you must let me play truant for once; I shall work better for it in time coming.

Well! You are a dear, warm-hearted, fiery-tempered, faithful, affectionate creature: and tho' you should not have done the Doctor so much honour as to get enraged at him, it was kind and like yourself to despise and disbelieve his little cal-

umnies. At the same time, I will not insult our friendship by thanking you for this: it were indeed poor times with us if our esteem for one another lay at the mercy of every puny whipster that chose to take it on him to criticise us: you have done as I should do in a similar case. As for our satirical and medical friend, I cannot say that this little piece of magnanimity has perceptibly altered the place he held in my estimation. Considering his circumstances, it can excite little surprise and still less resentment. Small as the man's feelings may be, ridiculous as we may think his fancied injuries, to him they are not ridiculous: the least and weakest of living creatures is a universe for itself: the hopes and wishes of a grasshopper are to that grasshopper all in all. Let us be just to the Doctor: it was difficult to be generous, not easy to be even candid, in his case; I forgive him for this time; and trust that when he next goes to the George Inn to see me order a horse and (finding it spavined and mounted with a coach-saddle) to counter-order it, I may have grace given me to go thro' that appalling operation in a more heroical manner.

For the rest, tho' I regret that you should have taken the trouble to *quarrel* with little Fyffe, I rather rejoice that your intimacy is concluded. Blind chance never in its most capricious mood brought two more uncongenial souls into contact than yours and his: friendship it was impossible that *you* should ever feel for him; and what *he* was presuming to feel the most careless might discover. I declare it did astonish me: the impudence of the human heart seemed to me to pass all calculation; I should as soon have thought of perching myself upon the horns of the moon. — Pshaw! The body is going

to make me also get sour at him, if I think any longer of this.

Doubt not that I wait with eager anxiety for the explanations you have promised me. It is a subject not without interest to either of us. I more than once meant to write of it; but feelings you can easily conceive forbade me. How delightful it is that we have no secrets; but love each other, and trust each other, and are of one heart and mind even now! Do you think that it will continue? I sometimes think so. Many circumstances are against us; but *we ourselves* are in our favour! Consider that, *mein Kind*, and let us hope the best.

You do not say how you get on with *Rübezahl*, the Carrot-counter, or with your history and other studies. Of course this journey to Edinburgh must have interfered with you a little; yet you will still get something done; and on the whole a little moderate dissipation will do you good. For Heaven's sake, how *is* your health? On this point I have often tired you: let me again beg for my sake that you would be careful, solicitous on this matter. The loss of health is a thing quite possible with one of your temper and habits: it involves the loss of nearly all that life contains worth having. One thing I still must press upon you: it is to keep your mind as free as possible from vexatious thoughts. Above all, never let the slowness of your intellectual progress disturb you. Life is short, but not nearly so short as your fancy paints it: there is time in it for many long achievements, many changes of object, many failures both of our hopes and fears. *Festina lente* is the motto: you make the greatest speed that way; if anything can be attained, you attain it; if nothing, nature did not

mean it; she has had fair play, and wherefore should we fret? That you write so slow and can still fix on nothing, I do not value a rush; in your circumstances, secluded and solitary as you have always been, it is of no account whatever. See! I am half a dozen years older than you; have done nothing else but study all my days, yet I write slow as a snail, and have no project before me more distinct than morning clouds. And do you think, my Dear, that I have given up hopes of writing well, as well as nine-tenths of "the mob of gentlemen that write with ease," — far better than almost any of them, when in my vain key? By no manner of means, I assure you: my hopes are as good at this time as they ever were. Faith! and Patience! These are literary as well as religious virtues. Let us fear nothing.

You must not go away from Edinburgh till I come, — if you can possibly help it. There is no certainty in these people: they are gone to Edinburgh themselves, and have left me here to follow on the tenth, Saturday week. Then I shall be down without fail. At present I am not very uncomfortable: the young men and I are quite alone; they are fine creatures and esteem me extremely in their way; and what is better, they leave me much time at my own disposal, and I am rather busy. *Schiller* will be done at last in about a week. God be thanked! for I am very sick of him. It is not in my right vein, tho' nearer it than anything I have yet done. In due time I shall find what I am seeking. — When not writing, what health permits but at rare intervals, I go striding along these roads, or trotting the "constitutional trot"; thinking of many things, — often of Schiller; and ever and anon a little

wicked gypsy, whose face I know too well, is poking her nose into the concern — doing her best to distract my attention. Devil take you! But I will be revenged on you for all this yet.

Now, will you write to me, before I leave this place — that is to say, before ten days? I know you will. Also do try if possible to let me see you in Edinburgh. I am never absent from you a week, till I begin longing again to see you; and we almost never meet without etiquette or some cursed business depriving us of nine-tenths of the pleasure. It is very provoking: but I swear it shall not always be so! I will go with you to London by the first of May — at least I hope and believe so. Write soon to me. God bless you my beloved Jane! Be good and love me.

Yours forever,

TH. CARLYLE.

LETTER 83

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Edinburgh

1, MORAY STREET, (PATTISON'S LODGINGS),
Sunday, '8 February, 1824.'

MY DEAREST, — I arrived here yesterday; and need not tell you how anxious I am to see you or at least know how you are. If you can see me, say when, and I will come. Five minutes spent beside you is worth something under all embarrassments. If you cannot see me, it will be very hard; but never mind: let me hear minutely how you are: we can still write. I am free of the Bullers for three months: I join them next in London; — with you? I must be dreadfully busy with *Meister: Schiller*

nearly killed me; but it is done. — How *does* this place agree with you? Are you quite recovered? God forever bless you!

I am yours always and wholly,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

Your Letter would come sooner if sent under cover to my Brother in 35 Bristo Street. Here, by Post, it will hardly reach me till Tuesday. But any way I shall be content. You can take the *Jungfrau* with you to Haddington. Good night! I think of you, tho' I cannot see you; being rather lackadaisically inclined at present — but ever Jane's,

T. C.

LETTER 84

Miss Welsh wrote a line or two to John A. Carlyle asking him to tell his Brother that she would be disengaged to-morrow (10 Feb.), and glad to see him between eleven and twelve. Carlyle and Miss Welsh seem to have met frequently during this month. The following Letter shows that there had been a "Lovers' quarrel," but not a very serious one.

Miss Welsh to T. Carlyle, c/o Mr. John Carlyle, 35 Bristo Street

22 GEORGE SQUARE, Sunday,
'29 February, 1824.'

MY DEAREST FRIEND, — You predicted sensibly enough that my conscience would punish me for behaving to you in such a nonsensical manner. You had no sooner taken yourself off, pulling the door to with a vengeance behind you, than I was ready to hang myself for having occasioned you pain, and wasted such a fine opportunity for con-

versing with one another freely, as may not occur to us again for God knows how long.

I do not know how it was. I believe the Devil tempted me to be absurd and ill-humoured at the outset; and your imperturbable patience provoked me to continue so until the end. And now that I am come to myself, I appear far more despicable in my own sight than I can possibly do in yours. Unkind to *you* who are always so kind to me, so zealous to serve me, so solicitous for my welfare! Can you forgive me? Indeed, indeed I do love you and respect you (for all my nonsense), as well I may. Say that you forgive me, that you love me not a whit the less for my yesterday's *tirevee*;[1] and I will give you a whole dozen of voluntary kisses at the earliest opportunity. Think of this: I assure you I never offered such liberal terms of reconciliation to mortal man before.

And now, when am I to see you and hear your mind on the matter? My Mother has made an appointment tomorrow at half after eleven; so that supposing you were to come at the usual time, I could not remain with you above a few minutes. Next day we return to Haddington; but I shall pack my duds the night before, and endeavour to be at leisure from 11 till 12, if you will call then. Idiot that I was, to kick to the Devil the two good hours that fortune offered me to talk with you! — I do not think you can forgive me in your heart. Can you? Yow will call on Tuesday however.

Yours most penitentially,

JANE B. WELSH.

[1] A fit of passion, or the extravagant mode of displaying it, as by prancing, stamping, etc. Perhaps from Fr. *tirer* & *vif*. — *Jamieson*.

Letter 85

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

1, Moray Street, 7th March, 1824.

My dearly beloved Critic, — Your Letter[1] came to me on Tuesday morning: it found me bending under the weight of *Meister* like an Ass between two dust-panniers, and relieved me with a touch of nourishment and hope. I determined to answer it on Sunday: and here accordingly I sit scribbling to you, as if there were no Gospel in the country. I know it is very wrong; but how am I to help it? Throughout the week, it is second only to the Brixton Treadmill; nothing but write and walk, walk and write, from morn to midnight. Besides I have no seat in their Kirks, nor are their Parsons of the kind I like to hear. From all which premises, the inference is plain.

I noticed your sarcastic looks in the coach, and expected your new sally on my *genius*. But alas! if you knew the whole history of that adventure, what obstacles I had to overcome, what exertions to make, I know you would feel your mind *subdued* with reverence for my dexterity, despatch and *savoir faire*, as it is already struck with admiration of my graces and chivalrous accomplishments. I have magnanimity enough to pass it over in silence! You praise the Indian Rubber, and ask me what your debt is. A question easy to answer! Simply a *dozen* (shillings, for books, paper, &c, &c), a dozen lying out at the highest rate of legal interest, and payable on demand.

[1] This Letter has been lost.

I suppose you design becoming bankrupt: but you had better not.

Our friend the Tiger[1] seems to be a genius also; at least he usurps the privileges of one. I have seen no glimpse and heard no whisper of him, since you went away. This is somewhat unlucky, as I go to the Country very soon, and wished to take Gillies's[2] books with me. To complete the matter, Dr. Irving has taken a *stitch in his side*, and cannot be spoken with. Tomorrow I am going to write to Pearce [Gillies] for his tomes: if he like to lend them, well; if not, no harm is done: I have no other matter with him.

I heartily wish you were back among these Tigers and people, to amuse yourself here. Haddington is not the place for you at all. Both your Mother and you would be infinitely happier in Edinburgh. Would she not send you hither to look out for some beautiful Cottage in the middle of a garden, down about Trinity or some other of the suburbs? I do hope she will ultimately be prevailed upon. . . . Do not tell me that I am meddling with an affair that I am not concerned in: nothing that might render your life more comfortable or successful can be indifferent to me.

Meanwhile I am glad to observe that you have fallen upon the only plan which can drive away the tedium of your present residence: a sedulous practice of study and intellectual amusement. It is pity on the whole that you have abandoned Gibbon; but it is of no use to struggle against the stream. Dr. Johnson said with considerable justice, that it

[1] Walter Dunlop, a cousin of Miss Welsh.

[2] Robert Pearce Gillies, an Edinburgh advocate and literary man, author of "Memoirs of a Literary Veteran," etc.

was hardly ever advisable to read any book against your inclination.[1] Where the inclination is averse, the attention will wander, do as you will. I recollect reading Harte's *Gustavus Adolphus* with an immense sacrifice of feeling to will; and I remember less of it than of any book I ever perused. I trust by and by you will resume Gibbon, and finish both him and Hume. Do you like Robertson? I used to find in him a shrewd, a systematic, but not a great understanding; and no more heart than in my boot. He was a kind of Deist in the guise of a Calvanistic Priest; a portentous combination! But if you are for fiery-spirited men, I recommend you to the Abbé Raynal, whose *History*, at least the edition of 1781, is, to use the words of my tailor respecting Africa, "*wan coll* (one coal) of burning sulphur." Of this by and by. Meantime, I fear you are again erring in excess. Four hours a-day you ought to regard as a complete allowance for serious study: the rest of the day, you should not employ in any thing but what yields you enjoyment for its own sake. Tell me most minutely how you get along; what portions of your plan you find executable; when you rise in the mornings; what part of *Rübezahl* is done; and what *are* your general occupations. I do not think you should rise till you like, each particular morning. Life has many hours and days in it; tho' you and I consider it, in our imaginations, as a thing that is travelling more swift than a hippogriff. If I could *get* any "feathers to sit upon," I should let your "fame" travel whithersoever it listed. But there is no rest for the wicked. Necessity like a strong "Black-whipper" drives us all before him: when hope has sunk or faded in

[1] See "Life of Dr. Johnson," ii. 232 (P. Fitzgerald's ed.).

front of us, *his* scourge is heard cracking in our rear. But what I meant to say has not much to do with him or his scourges: it was merely that *four hours* daily is more than one literary man out of a thousand gets bestowed on purely intellectual operations. Therefore be content. The student is always studying: but of book-learning there are limits. I think a person in four years might gain nearly all the really valuable and original ideas that can be drawn from books. — Mercy on us! What preaching!— I am done.

Monday-morning. — They have sent me down the remaining sheets of *Meister;* which I must now wrap up and send to you. "Out of economical motives" do not send me back *any* of them. Keep them all lying together in some of your desks or drawers; and when the number is complete, we will have them bound together by way of curiosity, and keep them as a monument of pleasant times. In other respects they are worth nothing: so if you happen to lose one or two of them, do not fret about it: you are to have another copy the moment the book is finished. I fear, however, you will never read it: the romance, you see, is still dull as ever. There is not properly speaking the smallest particle of *historical* interest in it, except what is connected with Mignon; and her you cannot see fully, till near the very end. Meister himself is perhaps one of the greatest *ganaches* that ever was created by quill and ink. I am going to write a fierce Preface, disclaiming all concern with the literary or the moral merit of the work; grounding my claims to recompense or toleration on the fact that I have accurately copied a striking portrait of Goethe's mind, the strangest, and in many points the greatest

now extant. What a work! Bushels of dust and straws and feathers, with here and there a diamond of the purest water!

My chief wish at present is that it were done. We get along dreadfully slow: the creatures are printing what they call "Session"; that is law-papers, and unless I went to bully them every second day, I believe they would stop altogether. As it is, I perceive we shall not be done in April, scarcely in May. In consequence of this, combined with my determination to spend at least a month in Annandale for the sake both of my health and my heart, we have changed our plans a little. So soon as the second volume is concluded, I retire to Mainhill to translate the remainder at my leisure; it is to be printed when I return hither on my way to London. *Then* also I will come to Haddington, and stay till your Mother and you are heartily tired of me. I think it will be very pretty for a time, however; so you must try if you can make room for me. I hope to be in Annandale about three weeks hence; a fortnight was the time specified, but I see clearly, it cannot be. For the present I am higgling with the well-fed bibliopolist about pecuniary terms. We went into the business without a word formally said on the matter; but in a day or two the thing must now be finally reduced to black and white, and these money-changers prevented from cozening me out of sixpence that is mine. Brewster the other morning, disclosed to me such a scene of the villanies of these base earthly Booksellers, as was enough to make one's hair "to stand on end, like quills upon the fretful porcupine." Boyd sent me a long paper of terms, thro' the fair exterior of which, illuminated by the experience of

the scientific Doctor I was enabled to descry a thousand inlets for pettyfogging. So I appended two small and simple conditions, on which the man has ruminated since Saturday without reply. The first was that £250 should be my share of the proceeds of the first 1000 copies: the second that after 3000 copies had been sold, the book was to be *mine* and my heirs' forever and ever. Thus it stands at present. I will reduce the £250 to £200, if they entreat for it; but no lower: if they do not like my terms, we shall part company and get another tradesman: Brewster offers to be my half in the speculation, upon reasonable terms. Do you dare, you unreasonable tyrant, to call me a Genius any more? I swear I am no Genius at all; but a most expert youth. My conduct like that of her late Majesty is guided in all points by "perfect wisdom": I know of nothing foolish in it, except perhaps my love for you — which I often think will lead me a wild dance yet. Yet I do sometimes think you are an angel. At any rate Fate not I am to blame in the matter. *Ich kann nicht anders* [I can do no otherwise].[1]

And now, when will you write to me again? Consider Madam that you are your own task-mistress: what is to hinder you from writing me a sheet per day? Yet I must own you are very good to me; and I ought not to press you further. Will you write this week? I beg you will excuse this most barbarous Letter: you know how I am hurried and spurred to death. At any rate we have now been friends for centuries, and will be to the end

[1] Schiller's "Don Karlos," Act v. sc. 10. The same words were also used by Luther on a famous occasion. (See "Lectures on Heroes," p. 159, Library ed.)

of time. What matters it how or what we write? Will you present my kindest regards to your Mother: is she recovered completely? Be sure you tell me. If she miss-happen, *que deviendrez-vous!* God bless you, *meine Eigene!* [my own one!].

I am ever yours,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

LETTER 86

Miss Welsh to T. Carlyle, 1, Moray Street, Edinburgh

HADDINGTON Sunday, '14 March, 1824.'

DEAREST, — I looked for your Letter on Monday, as my reward for a week's diligence, and I was not disappointed. It is very good of you to write me such charming long Letters when you are over head and ears in business. Indeed I can never wonder enough at your kindness to me in all things; it is really very affecting! God grant that some day or other, I may deserve it! This hope is the only thing that keeps me from quarrelling with myself outright, when I think of all my demerits in the time past. I declare I am very much of Mr. Kemp's way of thinking, that "certain persons are possessed of Devils even in the present times!" Nothing less than a Devil (I am sure) could have tempted me to torment you and myself, as I did on that unblessed day.[1] Woe to me then, if I had had any other than the most constant and generous of mortal men to deal with. Blessings on your equanimity and magnanimity! You are a dear good patient *Genius*. You are sure you forgive me?

[1] See *ante*, Letter 84.

forgive me in the very core of your heart? I would rather pay you another dozen of *shillings* than that you should bear me the smallest grudge.

For the first time these great many months I am not ashamed to tell you how I have been living. For *two whole weeks* I have rigidly adhered to my new system. It will answer well I find. By the help of the Lord I have been upon my feet every morning by half after seven, and throughout the day I have not suffered anything or anybody to interfere with my tasks. Indeed it will be all my own fault if I relapse into idleness in my present circumstances: for there are very few obstacles and no temptations at all, in the way of my industry. My arch enemy headache is fairly beaten off the field; and what with the explosion of the combustible Doctor, and the progress of the *L—ists*, or the *Holy Alliance* as it is called here, I am delivered from many interruptions that used to vex me grievously. This Dr. L—— (you must know) is a rascally Practitioner of Medicine, who settled here as an opponent to my Uncle Benjamin, and waged an exterminating Pamphlet-war against him. But my poor Uncle was an over-match for him; the excited feelings of the whole county were on *his* side; his *name* was deemed a sufficient guarantee for his ability and honourable conduct; and the proper spirit with which he met the other's attacks, *non timens bella, non provocans* [neither "shunning nor seeking the fight"], obliged him at last to desist. If the hot-headed Doctor had depended for a livelihood on the favour of the public, he must have long ago either starved or shifted his quarters; but as the Devil would have it, his Wife has a handsome jointure, and he can give dinners and run a fine

gig without asking any one's leave. And so it is, tho' four years ago he was hooted out of all decent company as a lying unfeeling bravo, he has so dined and gigged himself into favour again that a powerful faction has conspired to bear him out thro' thick and thin. Our connection with Dr. Howden,[1] as well as the recollection of his infamous conduct towards my Uncle, requires that we should set our faces stoutly against such doings: and the rivalry and animosity that is betwixt our party and his, is come to such a pitch that I am in daily expectation of a general running to arms. It is not Dr. Fyffe's fault that we are not at it tooth and nail by this time: he has twice given L—— the lie to his face; but no challenge has ensued,—nor will. That gallant Doctor likes better to fight with pens than pistols: *quietissimus in ipso discrimine qui ante discrimen fortissimus*[2] [he is meekest in the fight who before the fight was boldest]. But this is a most unmerciful digression. However, if you knew with what party fury every individual hereabouts has entered into this Medical contest, you would not wonder that I have caught the infection of it.[3] What I was meaning to explain to you is, that in consequence of the split in our commonwealth, it is not so hard a matter for me to keep to the regulations which I

[1] Dr. Howden had been Dr. Welsh's partner.

[2] This is a clever parody or adaptation of the following sentence in Tacitus: "*Fortissimus in ipso discrimine exercitus est, qui ante discrimen quietissimus*" (The army that in time of peace is the most amenable to discipline, is the bravest in the day of battle).—"Hist.," i. 84.

[3] This sordid burgh-squabble has an important bearing, and this long account of it cannot well be omitted, for it explains one of the chief causes of Miss Welsh's dislike to Haddington, and her refusal to reside there after her marriage to Carlyle.

have laid down for myself in the disposal of my time. Not that I should mind in the smallest disobliging those calling people by refusing to have anything to say to them: I value their most vile voices not a straw. But the mischief is, I cannot disoblige them without running the risk of disobliging my Mother also; and domestic *accordance*, I find, to be absolutely indispensable to that tranquil frame of mind which is proper for study. To avoid those who are still in the practice of breaking in upon us before one o'clock, I have excogitated an expedient for which I think I deserve some credit. While my Mother was *colded* we got into a way of breakfasting in her dressingroom, and finding that this arrangement, by which two pairs of stairs and a great many wooden doors are interposed between me and my enemies, contributed very considerably to my security, I managed to have it continued after my Mother got well again. I was still liable, however, to be sent for to the diningroom, and must then either have complied or have irritated my Mother by a point blank refusal. The way I have fallen upon to avoid this inconvenience, is the simplest that can well be imagined; and nevertheless it has hitherto proved effectual. When I get up in the morning I merely dash the sleep out of my eyes with cold water, comb up my hair and whip on my dressinggown, taking care never to dress myself till after one o'clock. As my Mother discovers no deeper motive in this proceeding than laziness or perhaps *economy*, she does not at all object to it. And now, observe, when anyone comes, she knows well enough that I am not *fit to be seen*, and so does not make any attempt to produce me.—My paper is almost filled, and I have still a great

many things to say to you ; but as my affection for you is great, I cannot find in my heart to cross such writing as this, and will keep them all till another opportunity. When shall I have more of *Meister?* I do not know yet what to think of it. I cannot separate your interest in it from Goethe's or my own opinion of it from what is likely to be the opinion of the public. I wish however, it had not been so—*queer*. My Mother sends her best regards. She was *highly pleased* with your last Letter. Depend upon it, my Friend, it is for the good of us both that she is admitted into our correspondence. So *remember!* no *darlings* or anything *of that nature*, —*in English;* but never mind that: my heart supplies them for you, wherever they can be *crammed* in. When will you write? On Tuesday, at farthest. — God bless you ever!

Devotedly yours,

JANE WELSH.

LETTER 87

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

1, MORAY STREET, Monday, '22 March, 1824.'

BESTES LIEBCHEN,— I know you will be expecting these sheets today, and I cannot think of disappointing you of any small enjoyment they can yield you. For the rest, you must excuse my haste and insufficiency in writing: I never was so hurried all the days of my life. I have taken out my seat in the Coach for Thursday morning,[1] and they are determined to have done with the second volume ere I go; of which *thirty pages* are still in German.

[1] Carlyle went home to Mainhill on the 25th of March, 1824.

MRS. WELSH

Nevertheless I will have half an hour's talk with you, betide what may.

Your Letter was a precious thing for me. I wish you would adopt that close hand, and fill your sheet so well, and be so earnest and good-humoured and kind on all occasions. Rather I should ask of Fate to be so kind to *you* on all occasions: I believe it was the air of happiness which breathed from this Epistle that more than usually enlivened me. *You* are always good, always bountiful in heart; your circumstances alone are liable to vary. For all this you deserve considerable *preferment;* and shall have it yet, *mein Kind.*

As to that "unblessed" day's work, what farther can be said about it? I do not think it possible for the "mind of man" entirely to forgive such a thing, within less than half a century. Yet I have very *nearly* forgiven you "even to the heart's core": we shall see what farther can be done when we *come to settle accounts.* But remember your Bill payable at sight! My own private idea is that you are a *witch:* or like Sapphira in the New Testament, concerning whom Dr. Nimmo once preached in my hearing: "It seems probable, my friends, that Ananias was tempted unto this by some demon *more wicked than his Wife.*" But these are things too high for me.

In seriousness, I am extremely glad to learn that you are getting on with some employment that improves you and keeps your conscience quiet. Walk forward in that steady manner; neither loitering nor overtasking yourself. Remember Ralpho's Proverb given in *Hudibras*, "*Slow fire does make sweet malt.*"[1] You will have a vast quantity of *Rübezahl*

[1] "Hold, hold, quoth Hudibras, Soft fire,
They say, does make sweet malt. Good Squire,

ready against my coming in the end of April or beginning of May. What a glorious correcting of it we shall have! I beg especially that you do not forget your two hours' walking: headache I look upon as your most dangerous enemy, and not otherwise to be dislodged and defied. Tell me carefully how you go on with all this: I desiderate a multitude of details in your last Letter, copious as it is. Do you ever see the little Doctor, and how fares he? This L—— whom you talk of is a paltry character, as I have heard: it were natural for you to feel a spleen against him, even if he had never been concerned more nearly with you. Yet let him have his swing: a dog is but a dog, however much they fondle him and pat him; and will but pass for a dog at last. I should regret this burgh squabble if it seriously vexed you: but I suppose it only lends a little interest to what would otherwise be dull and indifferent, the doings and avoidings of your civic neighbours. What a pretty thing it would be to see little Fyffe fighting a duel with this unworthy Practitioner! I figure him cholerick but concentrated, with one foot advanced, the brow racked up,—"stiffening the sinews, lending to the eye a terrible aspect"[1] — "Angels and ministers of grace defend us!"[2] Yet after all Fyffe is a courageous little fellow; as such I respect him, and almost even love him.

Since I wrote last, there has been no change in my manner of existence; scarcely any incident in my

> *Festina lente,* Not too fast;
> For haste (the proverb says) makes waste."
> "Hudibras," Pt. i. canto iii, ll. 1251–4.

[1] *Cf.* "King Henry V," Act iii. sc. 1.

[2] "Hamlet," Act i. sc. 4.

history. I settled with Boyd[1] in a style worthy of Yorkshire itself. . . . We had a little sharp discussion on the subject; and speedily agreed. Boyd is an open-handed Bibliopolist: he is no niggard, nor do I reckon him a knave. He pays me down £180 (the sum I asked) on the day of publication, and has the total property of these 1000 copies at present printing. If he sell them all, he will be well remunerated; if he do not sell one of them, it will be quite the same to me. For the second edition he gives me £250 *per* 1000 copies, and after that the book is mine. I partly expect to make another £500 of it: but any way, I am already paid sufficiently for all my labour. Am I a *Genius* still? I was intended for a *horse-dealer* rather. — You will not like this second volume a jot better than you did the first: I only tell you to pause in your judgement till you have seen it all. There are two leaves wanting at the end of vol. I., but they contain nothing save a *kiss* from the Countess to Wilhelm, who milksop as he was, deserved no treat of that kind. It will keep me all April as busy as a turnspit. But I shall get better health at home, and with health there is no fear of me. Will you write every week, and be ready to pay me in May? If you do not, there is nothing but the horrors of a jail before you: I have it in black and white against you, and his Majesty's Justices of the Peace shall hear of it if you deny. Was ever poor young woman so beleaguered? Owes me *twelve shillings* current money, and must pay it or be gazetted and imprisoned! I declare I feel some pity for you: but it cannot be helped. Will you write to Mainhill next Sunday? I get home on Thursday-night.

[1] For the translation of "Meister's Apprenticeship."

I owe a little paragraph to the history of my friendship with the *Tiger* and its consequences. Not seeing him, and needing his promised service, I wrote to Pearce [Gillies], requesting information and mentioning the name of Dunlop. There arrived no shadow of an answer: and so the matter terminated! This is no heart-breaking business: life, I believe, even without the aid of Mr. Gillies, may still be carried on; and the information which he could have given me I have already got from other quarters. . . . I love the jolly Tiger not a particle the worse for this neglect: even Pearce himself I love. I am growing a very Irving in love.

But the paper is done, and time is done, and your patience is done; so I must end. My kindest regards to your Mother; I hope she is completely well: has she not forgot that she is to be taxed with me in May? This Letter is far too long: I will give but two pages next time. Will you write to me on Sunday? Farewell my dearest Enemy! Be good till you see me, and then better. I am ever yours,

T. Carlyle.

Letter 88

Miss Welsh to T. Carlyle, Mainhill

Haddington, Sunday, '4 April, 1824.'
[By Post-mark]

Dearly Beloved, — I trust you have not been taking it into your head that anything tragic is come to pass in our commonwealth: all is going on excellently well, only I have been pushed for time this day or two. I bear in mind what you told me of Frederick the Great, and am quite aware that this

excuse for not writing to a friend looks immensely absurd; but it is God's truth nevertheless. On Sunday week I brought out my writing paraphernalia with the best intentions in the world, and actually wrote a page of a Letter to you; but I had been to Church twice that day in honour of Grace (my Aunt)[1] and had rode a great way the day before on a fractious horse from the same courteous motive. And with all this I was so worn out that I fell asleep holding the pen; and like the foolish virgins in Scripture, slept away my opportunity. Every day since, I have had to undergo a tea-party, an infliction which according to Haddington etiquette, lasts three good hours. Now three hours, with half an hour more, which is little enough in all conscience for the intricate operations of a young lady's toilet, and two hours which I am obliged to walk that I may keep myself in good health and my young Aunt in good humour, — make up all my spare time. The six hours which I have set apart for reading, I have said that nothing less than Fate shall interfere with, — and heretofore I have kept my word.

Have you finished the second volume of *Meister*, and are you in life? I wish I had been in your place that week just that I might know what *driving* would do for me. I suspect I should behave myself in such a breeze, much as a grown up lady of my acquaintance does when the bells ring for Church before she has finished dressing herself — lift up my voice and weep. I devoutly wish that you were done with this *Meister*. I like ill to see your fine *genius* engaged in such a service. One might as well set a mettled racer to draw in a dust-cart. Do not

[1] Miss Grace Welsh, one of Dr. Welsh's sisters.

think me an ass because I cannot swear allegiance to your "thrice illustrious Goethe": by and by when my understanding gets enlarged, it is to be hoped I shall admire him to your heart's content, and think *Wilhelm Meister* worthy of such a Translator. But in the meantime, I confess, the only thing that reconciles me to your expending so much time and trouble on it, is the *money* which it will bring you in. I would rather be able to make £180 by my wits than fall heir to a million, — it must be such a proud consciousness to know that one is independent of the favour of fortune; that one carries at all times a gold mine within one's own breast! Do you think they will give me one hundred and eighty *pence* for my Tales?

The unaccountable propensity to kissing which runs thro' all your *dramatis personæ* perplexes me sadly. I wish people may not think *you* a terrible fellow for having any hand in such work. By the way, what is the reason that you kept back the Countess's kiss? The prelude to it gives promise of something extremely pretty. I wish I had all of it. That poor little child[1] with St. Vitus's dance! I cannot possibly imagine what is to become of her. So far she seems to play much the same part in the piece which the text does in the generality of sermons: is perpetually recurring without having any visible connection with what goes before or after. How long will it be, for God's sake, before she is done learning geography? Do tell me her end, will you? I have a notion she is to die of eating sticks.[2] — Mother has made a nice binding of

[1] Mignon.

[2] "She [Mignon] would never be without some piece of packthread to twist in her hands; some napkin to tie in knots; some

boards and white ribbons for the loose sheets. I could not help kissing her for her ingenuity. She talks of you in the most friendly manner. I wish May was here, that we might make hay while the sun shines!

I am not in quite such commodious circumstances as when I wrote last. However my case is still far from desperate: only Grace is here, and I would much rather that she was anywhere else. She is very illmannered and unamiable; moreover, she is mortally jealous of *me*, and cannot hear a word said to my praise, even by my Mother, without discovering the bitterest spite. All this makes her anything but a pleasant companion for me. It is merciful that I am not obliged to *behave pretty* to her. Mother lets me have a fire in my own room, and sit there when I please; so that her being here is no interruption to my *plan;* and for six hours in the day I am quit of her intolerable spleen and impertinence. Mother tells me that whenever I take myself off, to my place of refuge, she sets to work to rail against learned ladies, and expatiate on the utter detestation which they are held in by the *gentlemen*. God grant that her ignorance may recommend her to their good graces![1]

I am getting on with the Tales at a slow but regular rate. What I have translated of the Legends of *Rübezahl* is certainly nothing like so heartbreaking as my sublime *Libussa*, tho' it is still far from what it should be. That is a blessed secret

paper or wood to chew." "Apprenticeship," Bk. iv. ch. 16. (Carlyle's Translation.)

[1] In the "Early Letters of J. W. Carlyle," p. 83–4, Miss Welsh writes of her aunt Grace in a strain exactly similar to the above.

you let [me] into of the point of Interrogation! Whenever I come upon a passage that I cannot manage, or word that is not in my Dictionary, instead of getting into a turmoil as I used to do, I merely set down the little crooked thing, and comfort myself with "he will tell it me when he comes!" — when he comes!

I am not *quite* done with Charles[1] yet. My memory is so bad that I require to learn a book of that sort almost by heart that I may retain any part of it. What would you advise me to get next? and what shall I do with the volume I have of Schiller? Oh! that divine *Maid of Orleans!* If you would translate *that*, since you will not write a Tragedy of your own! I cried over it two whole days whenever I had an opportunity; and I made a solemn vow to the Manes of Schiller that if you do not translate it, I will myself as soon as ever I am *strong* enough for such an enterprise. — You will write presently? I shall be very tired before this week is done; and will need some *encouragement*. I have two long forenoon rides and five evening parties *in prospectu*. — God bless you, my best and dearest Friend! Ever, ever yours,

JANE B. WELSH.

LETTER 89

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

MAINHILL, 15th April, 1824.

DEAREST, — Had it not been that you and I so well deserved some "encouragement" by our late conduct, I should not have attempted writing to you at present. But we are both growing very exem-

[1] "Charles V," by Robertson.

plary characters, in my opinion; and it seems fair that this correspondence of ours, one of the most pleasant items in our lot, should not be allowed to stagnate in the general reformation. I meant to write last Sunday: but hailstorms detained me at Annan, whither I had trotted down the previous evening, on some slender business; and next morning, sermons, civilities and especially native indolence so acted on me, that the day was altogether spent before I left that ancient burgh. I might have waited till next Sunday; but I have got into long trains of speculation about you; and I cannot rest at my business till I have written to you! So, casting all my tasks to the right and left, I am here this fair and blessed morning with the full purpose of inflicting three close pages on you.

I think this is the longest spell of study you ever had. I do congratulate you on your regularity, the quality which I hold to be the most essential of all others for realising any result in life. Of course I advise you not to relax; or rather I should advise you not to overstrain, for that is generally the source of your relaxing. The great point, as you well know, is constancy of moderate exertion: see that you do "let nothing less than Fate interfere with you." Independently of future effects, the effect upon your present feelings must be sufficient to repay your diligence. There is no peace or rest for you, save in vigorous endeavour. "The end of man is an action not a thought," saith Aristotle. You have thought of literature from your very cradle: it is time you were trying to act in it, according to your power. Is *Rübezahl* done? Spare not the little "crook!"[1] We shall answer all his questions

[1] *I. e.* the interrogation mark (?).

in the Ides of May. Have you done with *Charles V?* It is not at all bad work, if you can answer yes. I know not whether you have seen Robertson's *History of America:* if not try and get it, in preference to almost any other. Watson's two Histories of *Philip II.* and *Philip III.* you must also read as soon as possible: they form a very pleasing and instructive and amusing (tho' also very shallow) continuation of *Charles V.* There is Millot's *History of France;* Russell's *Modern Europe;* Schiller's *Thirty Years' War* (translated or in German); any of Voltaire's historical works. Tell me which you have selected. The convenience of getting them must direct your choice: so you study them faithfully, it matters little in what order. Did you ever read Defoe's works? They deserve reading. I suppose you dare not think of re-commencing Hume? Oh! no!

Is the unlearned lady gone? Mortals were surely made for being happy: vanity is cheap as air, yet it diffuses joy thro' all the corners of creation. Be tolerant to Grace while she is with you: she must have some good qualities, or I am no physiognomist. Her face always reminded me of yours; enlarged and rusticated, with Scotch *sonsiness* instead of dignified refinement. It is pity she were envious: but this is so general a failing that one ought not to condemn her for it utterly. Be good to her for your own sake. In time I expect to see you altogether catholic in your sentiments towards others. There is nothing like it, in the present state of affairs. Do you like this counsel? I myself am so immeasurably patient of dulness and contradiction, that I have a right to advise it upon all the earth!

So you laugh at my venerated Goethe and my *Herzenskind* [Darling] poor little wood-eating Mignon! O! The hardness of man's and still more of woman's heart! If you were not lost to all true feeling, now, your eyes would be as a fountain of tears in the perusing of *Meister*. Have you really no pity for the Hero, or the Count, or the Frau Melina, or Philine or the Manager? Well! it cannot be helped. I must not quarrel with you, do what you like; but taken on the whole, a more provoking young woman is not to be met with, I am sure, between Cape Wrath and Kirk-Maiden. Will you not cry in the least? Not a jot! Not a jot! — Seriously you are right about this Book, it is worth next to nothing as a Novel; except *Mignon* who *will* touch you yet perhaps, there is no person in it one has any care about. But for its wisdom, its eloquence, its wit; and even for its folly, and its dulness, it interests me much; far more the second time than it did the first. I have not got as many ideas from any book for six years. You will like Goethe better ten years hence than you do at present. It is pity the man were not known among us. The English have begun to speak about him of late years; but no light has yet been thrown upon him, "no light but only darkness visible." [1] The syllables *Goethe* excite an idea as vague and monstrous as the word *Gorgon* or *Chimæra*. — It would do you good to see with what regularity I progress in translating. Clockwork is scarcely steadier. Nothing do I allow to interfere with me; my movements might be almost calculated like the

[1] ". . . Yet from those flames
No light, but rather darkness visible."
Par. Lost," Bk. i. ll. 62–3.

Moon's. It is not unpleasant work, nor is it pleasant. Original composition is ten times as laborious. It is an agitating, fiery, consuming business when your heart is in it: I can easily conceive a man writing the soul out of him; writing till it evaporates "like the snuff of a farthing candle," when the matter interests him properly. I always recoil from again engaging with it. But this present business is cool and quiet; one feels over it, as a shoemaker does when he sees the leather gathering into a shoe; as any mortal does when he sees the activity of his mind expressing itself in some external material shape. You are facetious [about] my mine of gold: it has often struck me as the most accursed item in men's lot that they had to toil for filthy lucre; but I am not sure now that it is not the *ill-best* way it could have been arranged. Me it would make happy, at least for half a year, if I saw the certain prospect before me of making £500 per annum: a pampered lord (*e. g.* Byron) would turn with loathing from a pyramid of ingots. I *may* be blessed in this way: he never. Let us be content! When I get that weary *Cottage* erected, and all things put in order, who knows but it may be well with me, after all? Will *you* go? Will you? "Not a hair's breadth!" Well, it is very cruel of you.

It would edify you much to see my way of life here; how I write and ride, and delve in the *garth*, and muse on things new and old. On the whole I am moderately happy. There is rough substantial plenty here: for me there is heart-felt kindness in the heart of every living thing, from the cur that vaults like a kangaroo whenever he perceives me, and the pony that prances when he gets me on his back, up to the sovereign heads of the establish-

ment. "Better is a dinner of herbs with peace, than a stalled ox and contention."[1] Better is affection in the smoke of a turf cottage, than indifference amidst the tapestries of palaces! I am often very calm and quiet. I delight to see these old mountains, lying in the clear sleep of twilight, stirless as death, pure as disembodied spirits; or floating like cerulean islands while the white vapours of the morning have hidden all the lower earth. They are my own mountains! Skiddaw and Helvellyn, with their snowy cowls, among their thousand azure brethren, are more to me than St. Gothard and Mont Blanc: Hartfell and Whitecomb raise their bald and everlasting heads into my native sky; and far beyond them, as I often picture, in their bright home, are Jane and her Mother, sometimes thinking of me, cheering this dull earth for me with a distant spot of life and kindliness! — Bless me! the sweet youth is growing quite poetical! *C'est assez!*

So I have played truant all the morning writing to you! When will you answer me? Do you recollect your bet? The day is coming! I am,

Thy evil *Genius*,[2]

T. Carlyle.

Make my kindest compliments to your Mother: it is very good of her to speak of me at all. — Schiller you may send to John, 35, Bristo Street. Has he written for it? He will get you any other you may desire. Adieu! Soon!

[1] Evidently an adaptation of "Proverbs," xv. 17.

[2] *Cf.* "Thy evil spirit, Brutus." — "Julius Cæsar," Act iv. sc. 3.

Letter 90

Miss Welsh to T. Carlyle, Mainhill

Haddington, 29 April, '1824.'

My beloved Brother, — The Devil has interfered with me! At the time that you was writing commendations on my diligence, I had been idle for near a fortnight. You remember the little skipping lady that made a progress with us along The Bridges,[1] at the most eminent bodily risk? She has been here with us, on a visit, and as my Mother was far from well at the time, the whole burden of entertaining her and my *engagingly unlettered* Aunt devolved upon me. This fresh interruption had so discomposed and dispirited me, that when the coast was clear again, I felt more in a humour to regret the many days so lost than to make myself amends by redoubled industry. But your Letter set all to rights again, and made me so very impatient to resume my plan that I could scarcely wait out the Lord's day on which it reached me. This is not the first time that your words have worked a beneficial revolution in my frame of mind: many is the time that they have roused me out of listlessness and dejection, when nothing else could, into ardour, activity and hope.[2] Oh! what I owe you, besides the dozen kisses!

For these last ten days I have been getting on again in good style. I have finished *Charles* [*V.*] and am in the second volume of the *History of America*. At this rate I calculate on getting through

[1] The name of a street in Edinburgh.

[2] See also "Early Letters of J. W. Carlyle," p. 78.

with all the books which you recommend to me in about twenty years. If the Deity of Spurzheim had not neglected to supply my head with the organ of memory, a shorter time might perhaps suffice. It is a great misfortune for me that I am so defective in this particular. I am obliged to get almost the whole of what I read, by heart, that I may remember any part of it. As for *Rübezahl* (to my shame be it spoken), I am still in the Fifth Legend. However, I might have been done with his Gnomeship long ago, if I had spent all my four *German hours* on him. But I thought it more adviseable to devote half that time to reading the rest of the Tales; and then it takes me near as long to scribble a page as to translate one; in fact I am slow — snailishly slow at everything. But the Lord's will be done!

When will you be here? I long for your coming this time; for I think we shall be very happy, that is providing Dr. Thumb[1] does not shoot you dead. I have run against him several times of late. We pass each other with a haughty recognition. Oh! it is great to see the little man on these occasions, the face of him looking defiance, as he raises his hand to his hat, — his white hat, — and "struts a straw-breath nearer to the skies!" I shall certainly laugh in his face some day or other. After my return from Edinburgh, he tried me with another fit of illness; but we just let him be doing; and when he saw that all his bleeding and boiling of himself was like to go for nothing, he all at once arose in excellent health; took a drive to Edinburgh, and — bought himself a white hat! At present he is exhibiting curious metamorphoses to the specu-

[1] Dr. Fyffe.

lative people in this quarter. From a slovenly muffled-up, snail-paced, little man, he is become the sprucest flourish of a creature that you could wish *not* to see. And, what is truly astonishing, this transformation took place in *one* day. If you only saw his yellow knee-caps!

Not a word from the Orator! So my magnificent *château en Espagne* is completely demolished! I will not go now, not a foot-length, tho' he was to write to me on his knees (which there is no great probability of his doing). But no matter, the Orator's self is the principal loser by this transaction. He has lost a *friend*, I merely a few weeks' amusement. Moreover it is possible for me to go to London some other time; but it is absolutely impossible for him ever to recover that place in my affections which he has forfeited. I could not have believed it! Nobody but Irving's self could have made me believe him so fickle and heartless. — Mother is hurrying me to go and dress for some silly people that are coming to tea. *N. B.* She is in raptures with you and your Letters. — Excuse this horribly insipid scrawl in consideration that I have been tormented twelve hours with a headache. Come! God bless you, my best friend.

For ever yours,

Jane B. Welsh.

Letter 91

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

Mainhill, 19 May, 1824.

Dearest, — Do you think I have forgotten you? You were never farther wrong in your life. In various humours grave and joyful, I have thought of you of late, with due assiduity, and, as I think, very orthodoxly. In proof of this you should have had a long Epistle ere now; but Fate and Oliver & Boyd are stronger than my resolutions, and I am forced to content myself with a brief and hurried scrawl, which I write on the faith of its being better to you than absolute nothing, this however being all that I dare believe respecting it.

About ten days ago, three days after I received your "good little" Letter, I finished the translation of the everlasting *Meister*. The next week I proposed to spend in visiting the few friends I have in this neighbourhood, that I might enjoy myself among them, void of care, for a day or two, before leaving poor old Annandale. But scarcely had I executed the fourth part even of this very slender purpose, when the wind thought proper to change into the North-east, and bring me a villainous sore-throat, which kept me gasping and gargling in the house, till the day before yesterday. And now that my holidays have been so pleasingly put by, the Preface for that unhappy Novel is to be written, I am to make arrangements for departure, to ride and run and write, so that if I had twenty hands and heads they would all be sufficiently employed.

Pity that one cannot arrange one's business better! Few except the indolent are ever hurried.

But however I get through all this, I am to be in Edinburgh on Tuesday afternoon. If you would have the charity to send me a line to No. 1, Moray Street, it would find me there. I am to be a very very short time in Edinburgh; *Meister* is all printed but five sheets; and my business in Athens may very soon be transacted. . . . But I shall see Haddington, shall I not? I hope to spend a *day in peace* with you: I would spend all my days beside you, if it suited. Write about this; and when and how; if it suit your Mother's convenience; and whether she continues *good* to me. Alack! I am sad when I think of leaving you. Scotland contains two million hearts; except those which Nature gave me, yours is the only one of them where I have any abiding place. Do you mean to oust me in the end? To raise a process of ejectment against me? I swear you must not; it will never do!

You are in a passion at the Orator, and well he merits pity and anger for his conduct to you. There is something very weak in having one's head turned by a run of vacant fashionable canaille assembling to hear sermon. Irving should really bethink him that tho' the Hatton Garden Chapel is fuller than it ever was, nay tho' William Hone sits in the front of his gallery, a monument of saving grace, and Lady Gersey, the hack of a thousand routs, — still the Earth at large, and the other Planets of the solar system are turning on their axes with no perceptible variation. Men still live and die, they marry and are given in marriage, love those that love them, forget those that forget them, hate those that hate them, and subsist on meat and drink, as they did

before *Judgment to Come* had been handled by its last Expositor. I declare sometimes when he comes into my head, I feel more splenetic against him than he deserves. For withal there is a fund of goodness in the man's heart, as of real talent in his head; tho' both are overclouded with a thousand blemishes and extravagancies. I firmly believe that at this moment he loves you with a more solid affection than ninety-nine hundredths of the people who are called friends bear to one another. That is he respects you, is pleased with the image of you, and *your gratitude is of high value to him.* Be tolerant if you can; do not cast him off forever, till you see how he turns. The fumes of this sweet wine, which he has been drinking by the barrel, have flown to his head; they might have turned a stronger head than his. He has ceased to write, from affectation, haste, and above all indolence: and *none* of his friends can say they are better off in this respect than others. He scarcely even writes to his Mother. Charity may exist, says Gibbon, without alms; friendship without expression of it by Letters. I sent him a Letter, by appointment, before leaving Edinburgh: it was, if I recollect, in the smooth-flowing *pococurante* vein which one adopts in such cases. He answered me after five weeks in a Letter containing about ten sentences. A third of it is devoted to you. After inviting me very cordially to stay in his house, while in London, and telling me that they are "in the transit from one house to another, living now with one friend now with another," he adds "this is the reason I have not written to Mrs. Welsh and my dear pupil, that I have not had it in my power to second the invitation which I gave her to come up, and fear I shall not have this season. For tho'

we be in a condition to receive a gentleman and one so dear to us and so simple in all his habits, we are not in a condition to receive a lady. But towards her, able or not able to show it, I must ever bear a Brother's heart, and something more, as being her teacher and her friend and the friend of the family." Be content with this touch of the pathetic! It is good enough for every-day wear; and Irving was not made for being a Pylades or an Orestes. — But why am I scribble-scribbling about him? He is *one* of the nine hundred millions of human bipeds that inhabit this Planet: he has his own fight to fight; and so have *we;* if he choose to stand by us, well; if not, there will be dry eyes when he departs. *Ohe jam satis!*

Poor Byron! Alas poor Byron! The news of his death [1] came down upon my heart like a mass of lead; and yet, the thought of it sends a painful twinge thro' all my being, as if I had lost a Brother! O God! That so many sons of mud and clay should fill up their base existence to its utmost bound, and this, the noblest spirit in Europe, should sink before half his course was run! Late so full of fire and generous passion, and proud purposes, and now forever dumb and cold! Poor Byron! And but a young man; still struggling among the perplexities, and sorrows and aberrations of a mind not arrived at maturity or settled in its proper place in life. Had he been spared to the age of three score and ten, what might he not have done, what might he not have been! But we shall hear his voice no more: I dreamed of seeing him and knowing him; but the curtain of everlasting night has hid him from our eyes. We shall go to him, he shall not return to

[1] Lord Byron died on 19th April, 1824, aged 36.

us. — Adieu, my dear Jane! There is a blank in your heart and a blank in mine, since this man passed away. Let us stand the closer by each other!

I am yours forever,

TH. CARLYLE.

Make my kindest compliments to your Mother. Is she recovered? Both you and she should be careful: surely it is a miserable season for health. Skiddaw and Helvellyn this morning are white as swans. The cattle are perishing on their burnt and shrivelled pastures, the very men at Ecclefechan Fair seemed shrunk and parched and *wae*. — Will you write on Tuesday? I *must* see you, if possible. Is *Rübezahl* done? Are your strangers gone? I long to hear of you, still more to see you.

LETTER 92

Miss Welsh to T. Carlyle, Mainhill

HADDINGTON, 20th May, '1824.'

IN the name of Heaven why don't you write to me?[1] I have waited day after day in the utmost impatience; and hope deferred has not only made my heart sick, but is like to drive me out of my judgement.

For Godsake write the instant this reaches you, if you have not done it before. I shall learn no lesson, settle to no occupation, till I have your Letter. Wretch! You cannot conceive what anxiety I am in about you. One moment I imagine you ill or in trouble of some sort; the next tired of me;

[1] Miss Welsh had not yet received Carlyle's Letter of the 19th of May.

the next something else as bad. In short there is no end to my imaginings.

I do not think that in the whole course of our correspondence so long an interval has ever elapsed before: never but when we quarrelled — and this time there is no quarrel! To add to my perplexities, there have I had a Letter from that stupendous Ass the Orator,[1] telling me such nonsensical things; and among the rest, that he is full of joy because Thomas Carlyle is to be with him this month! Can he mean you? This month! and twenty days of it already past and gone! The man must have been delirious when he wrote such an impossible story. You can never, never mean to be in London this month! You promised to be here before you went, in words that it would be impiety to doubt. I have looked forward to your coming for weeks. You cannot dream of disappointing me!

What I would give to be assured this moment that excessive occupation is the sole cause of your present neglectfulness: that "devils" are dunning you for the rest of your book, and that you are merely giving yourself all to *Meister* just now that you may the sooner be all for me. Is it not hard? This is the only comfortable conjecture I can form to explain your silence; and yet I can never believe in it for more than a minute at a time. Were I but certain that all is really well, what a Devil of a rage I would be in with you! Write, write. — I will tell you about my *visit to London*, then; I have no heart for it now. What an idiot I was ever to think that man so estimable! But I am done with his Preachership now and forever.

[1] See extract from Irving's letter of 10th May in Appendix B, Note Three.

And Byron is dead! I was told it all at once in a roomful of people. My God, if they had said that the sun or the moon had gone out of the heavens, it could not have struck me with the idea of a more awful and dreary blank in the creation than the words, "Byron is dead!" I have felt quite cold and dejected ever since: all my thoughts have been fearful and dismal. I wish you was come.

Yours forever affectionately,

JANE WELSH.

LETTER 93

Miss Welsh to T. Carlyle, 1, Moray Street, Edinburgh

HADDINGTON, 25 May, '1824.'

DEVIL! — That I had you here to beat you with a stick! Such a fright you have given me! "Ten days and three," thou wretched calculator! it is four weeks since you got my Letter, at the very least. There is not a disaster under heaven, that I have not imagined to have befallen our commonwealth, within that time. Oh, my dear dear Brother, do not frighten me so again, if you can help it! It will take more than one quiet month to restore my nervous system to its proper tone!

May you come! My God! have not I been telling you to come for the last three months? "*A day* beside me"! You are very provoking. I cannot tell you how many days I wish you to spend beside me. My wish in that matter will be *as things turn out;* but do not go to fix any time for your journey, before we meet. You must stay longer than a day at all events.

How happy I shall be to see you again; to see you after all the perils you have passed *in my mind!* What day will you be here? Can I have the rest of *Schiller* yet? You are getting a charming day for your journey. Every hour is bringing you nearer! Thank God! I have you again: Byron's death made me tremble for all that I admire and love.

"Is *Rübezahl* done?" No! but it shall be before you come. *You* have made me idle for more than a week, — even you who are used to be my Good Genius. Till I got your Letter I could not settle to anything; indeed I had formed the wise resolution that I would not open a book, or put pen to paper, till it came. I cannot precisely say what good that was to do me; but I certainly found consolation in it. — You see my haste. My Mother is waiting for me to walk with her. She is *good* still. — God bless you, my Dearest. Despatch your business. Come!

Yours ever,
Jane Baillie Welsh.

Letter 94

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

1, Moray Street, Thursday, '27 May, 1824.'

Angel! — I never knew till now that you were such an adept in the art of scolding. You are in truth a charming scold; I could like to be so rated twenty times a day. How delicious it is to put you into such a glorious humour! But I will not trespass again, if I can help it; for I have still a

small spark of love for you in my heart, and I would not make you unhappy whatever I might gain by it. I design to love you thro' the whole of this summer at any rate.

Last night I wrote you such a Letter as you never read; the strangest mixture of enthusiasm and ridicule, and love and theology, and misery and rapture; such a thing as I could often write after two sleepless nights and harassed days, and as would keep you laughing for a month to come. But for this time, my better Genius had the upper hand; I burnt the sheet this morning, it having been too late for the post last night; and you, Mistress, shall never know a jot of the matter — at least of the sublime parts of it. Thus much only I will tell you: it promised that I, though very sick and jaded and stupid, would come to see you on Friday evening; a promise which I here from the heart confirm. Your Mother is very good; she will take me for a patient, if I cannot be a useful or amusing friend. "Brethern, I lack strength," as the Orator said in his late four-hours' Sermon. But what can I do? I *must* see you if the life be in me: and will too whatever come of it.

Do, my bonnie Lassie, get done with your *Rübezahl* before I come, if you can; if not we will finish it together. And Oh! such a harrowing as I will give it! I will be luculent as Nox, severe as Rhadamanthus. I will teach you what it is to jest with edge-tools.

Today I revised the last proofs of the Preface to *Meister*. It will be altogether off my hands tomorrow; and your Mother and you shall have complete copies on Thursday. If I can recollect I will bring the Preface with me. Thank Heaven that I am done with it!

Whether *Schiller* is printed and come I cannot tell. The Editor body wrote me a Letter several weeks ago, stating that he had been unwell and obliged to appoint another person to officiate in his stead; that my "interesting communication" had not by any means been lost from his drawer or his sight, that only it was long for their Magazine, &c, &c, &c. So we must just keep ourselves alive as we best can till the happy hour arrive. Whether it has already arrived, I will ask tomorrow, if I can think on.

But what is the use of talking with the pen, when Friday is so near? Make my kindest compliments to your Mother, and tell her I am coming. Expect me in the evening. Will you be good? There is nothing else for you! *Bist Du die meinige, bin ich der deinige? Ja, ewig, ewig!* [Art thou mine, am I thine? Yes, forever, forever!] I had such a fight today with Brewster and a Gothic German for the memory of our poor Byron! Adieu! God bless you my Dearest! I am always yours,

T. Carlyle.

Letter 95

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

1, Moray Street, Saturday, 2 o'clock,
'5 June, 1824.'

I am in the most tremendous hurry, but I snatch a moment to send my Dearest another farewell. I need not say if I was sad on Thursday to leave you; I have not had a merry hour since then. The image of our walks and conversations, of all that

we said and did together, is present to my mind with a painful distinctness; I am like a man fallen from the third heaven down among the meanness of vulgar Earth. Nothing but the hope that our meeting will be early and happy, and that at length we shall meet to part no more forever, could make my present situation tolerable. Be true to me and to yourself, my *Herzens Liebling* [heart's darling], and it will all be well! Our fate *may* be more enviable than that of millions: God grant we be not disappointed!

The Steamboat did *not* sail today. Had it not been for the sake of common discretion, I would have come back to you and staid till Tuesday-night. As it is I am sick of Edinburgh: my friends are all away; my business is all done; and a fine Smack sails tonight at seven — with nothing but Sir Something and two ladies in the cabin. So I depart in preference to waiting till Wednesday. About this day week, I expect to be in London. A Letter from Buller was waiting for me: they are not going to leave Town for I know not how long. The Boys and I are to have Lodgings somewhere in the vicinity, as they propose; and it seems possible enough that I may not visit Looe at all. This you will be glad to hear, as I am. The moment I am settled, my own dear Lassie shall hear from me. I have a Letter for Thomas Campbell from Brewster, and for various *Savants*. I will tell you about them in due time.

Here is a Shakespear, which I fear will only hurt your eyes. If so, let it lie upon the drawing-room table, and tell me that you are not reading it. Another copy may easily be had, and I could wish you to read it. You are to read Milton also, when you

see good, and the Histories regularly. I forgot to mention the *Edinburgh Review*, which I have often mentioned already. Your *second* duty will be performed strictly for my sake. Your *third* is the most important of any: love me every day better, as I shall assuredly love you.

For your Mother, I need not beg of you to be attentive and Daughter-like towards her. She and I *must* yet be better acquainted. It is nothing but a fineness of feeling, which should make us both dearer to each other, that prevents us from already enjoying all the pleasures of an intercourse as frank and cordial as ours will yet be. Assure her of my highest respect and gratitude.

And now, my Love, I must part with you. Much, much of the happiness of my existence depends upon you: but I know in whom I have confided. With a thousand faults in both of us, there is no particle of baseness in the heart of either. Adieu! I press you to my bosom, and pray that God may keep for me what is more to me than all things else. — Farewell my Dearest!

I am ever your own,
T. Carlyle.

Do not plague yourself with thinking of me till you hear that I am well and settled.

Two very short and unimportant Notes are omitted here. One is from Miss Welsh, of 19th June, in which she warns Carlyle not again to make use of such ardent expressions of love as were contained in his last Letter, — that of 5th June. "For mercy's sake keep in mind that my peace of mind, my credit with my Mother, the continuance of our correspondence, everything, depends upon your appearing

as my Friend, not as my Lover." (Readers will remember that Miss Welsh had for the sake of "domestic accordance" agreed that her Mother should be allowed to read Carlyle's Letters.)

The other is a Note from Carlyle, along with a book for Miss Welsh. It is dated Pentonville 23rd June, and promises a long Letter in the evening when he should have reached his new lodgings at Kew Green.

Letter 96

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

Kew Green, 23rd June, 1824.

Dearest, — Were I to delay longer it would seem unkind, and you might feel uneasy on account of me; yet if I write at present, it must be under the most importunate distractions, and vaguely as a man writes in a scene foreign to him, and among many circumstances which perplex him. Ever since parting with you, I have been bowled about incessantly; continually in motion, my thoughts also have been fitful, brief and many-coloured: I have laid up the materials of some ideas, but as yet they are unworked, and their presence excludes those that lay finished in my mind before. But to you, my *süsse Liebchen* [sweet darling], any thing from me has a value not intrinsic or dependent on its own qualities. You will peruse my travel's history with patience; and in return for it, you will send me your own; full, frank and *instantly*. Will you not?

I had the most melancholy sail to London. Cross winds, storms, and what was ten times worse, dead calms, and the stupidest society in nature.

Sir D—— I——, if indeed he be a knight of flesh and blood and not a mere shadowy personification of Dulness, snored assiduously beside me all night, and talked the most polite ineptitudes all day. He had a large long head like a sepulchral urn; his face pock-pitted, hirsute and bristly, was at once vast and hatchet-shaped. He stood for many hours together with his left hand laid upon the boat on the middle of the deck, and the thumb of his right hand stuck firmly with its point on the hip joint; his large blue rheumy eyes gazing on vacancy, the very image of thick-lipped musing. Captain Smith was of quite an opposite species, brisk, lean, whisking, smart of speech and quick in bowing; but if possible still more inane than Dulness. These two, Dulness and Inanity, contrived to tell me, in the course of our voyage, nearly all the truisms which natural and moral science have yet enriched the world withal. They demonstrated to me that sea-sickness was painful, that sea-captains ought to be expert, that London was a great city, that the Turks eat opium, that the Irish were discontented, that brandy would intoxicate. Oh! I thought I should have given up the ghost! Monsieur Dubois, a Strasburger, Lord Bute's factotum, with his flageolet, his *Vaillant Troubadour*, and his *Es hatt' ein Bauer ein schönes Weib* [There's a peasant has a beautiful wife], alone contributed to save me. I laughed at him every day about an hour. On Sunday, do you suppose I was very gay? The Bass was standing in sight all day; and I recollected where the Sunday before I had been sitting beside you in peace and quietness *at home!* But time and hours wear out the roughest day: next Friday at noon we were winding slowly thro' the forest of

masts in the Thames up to our station at Tower Wharf. The giant bustle, the coal-heavers, the bargemen, the black buildings, the ten thousand times ten thousand sounds and movements of that monstrous harbour formed the grandest object I had ever witnessed. One man seems as a drop in the ocean; you feel annihilated in the immensity of that heart of all the Earth.

The good Orator and his "dear Isabella" welcomed me with cordial words and looks; I thanked them from the bottom of my heart; for kindness in a strange land, is doubly kind. I staid with them till yesterday, and got along far better than I had anticipated. The Orator is mended since I saw him at Dunkeld: he begins to see that his honours are not supernatural; and his honest practical warmth of heart is again becoming the leading feature in his character. Depend upon it, my Dearest, you must not cast this man entirely away. He still loves you; he still means to attach you to him by substantial services. He contemplates your journey to London next summer as a thing certain; a thing from which you and he are both to derive much enjoyment and advantage. I said you seemed *indisposed* to it now; and that was all I said. Do not cast him quite away, if you can help it: as men go, there are very very few that even approach him in true worth, deducting all his faults; and true affection is so precious that any touch of it intermingled even with many other feelings in the bosom of an honest man is worth the keeping.

How I spent my time in London I will take a week to tell you when *we meet*. I have seen some notable characters; of whom I long to speak with you at large. Mrs. Montagu (do not tremble) is a

stately matron with a quick intellect and a taste for *exciting sentiments;* which two qualities by dint of much management in a longish life she has elaborated into the materials of a showy, tasteful, clear-sighted, rigid, and I fancy cold manner of existence, intended rather for itself and for being looked at, than for being used to any useful purpose in the service of others. She loves and admires the Orator beyond all others: me she seems to like better than I like her. I have also seen and scraped acquaintance with Procter (Barry Cornwall): he is a slender, rough-faced, palish, gentle, languid-looking man of three or four and thirty; there is a dreamy mildness in his eye; he is kind and good in his manners and, I understand, in his conduct: he is a poet by the ear and the fancy, but his heart and his intellect are not strong; he is a small poet. I am also a *nascent* friend of Allan Cunningham's; my dear, modest, kind, good-humoured Allan. He has his Annandale accent as faithfully as if he had never crossed the Border; he seems not to know that he is anything beyond a reading mason. Yet I will send you his books, and tell you of him; and you will find in him a genius of no common make. I have also seen Thomas Campbell: him I like worst of all. He is heartless as a little Edinburgh Advocate; there is a smirk on his face which would befit a shopman or an auctioneer; his very eye has the cold vivacity of a conceited worldling. His talk is small, contemptuous and shallow: the blue frock and trowsers, the eyeglass, the wig, the very fashion of his bow, proclaim the literary dandy. . . .[1] The aspect of that man jarred the music of my

[1] Some ten or twelve lines of criticism on Mrs. Campbell are omitted here.

mind for a whole day. He promised to invite me to his first "literary déjeuner": curiosity attracts, disgust repels; I know not whether will be stronger when the day arrives. Perhaps I am hasty about Campbell; perhaps I am too severe: he was my earliest favourite; I hoped to have found him different. — Of Coleridge, and all the other originals I will not say a word at present: you are sated and more.

Yet there is one *Original* whom I wish I had ten sheets to write about; my own dearest *Original*, whose image is never far from me, tho' many a weary mile-stone lies between us. How *are* you my beloved Enemy? Are you well? Are you busy? Alas! I think of Haddington, and the Green, and *Paradise*[1] and your little[2] garden; they come before my eyes, among strange scenes, with the clearness of paintings; and *she* and I are not there. Will you write to me next day? Do, Jane, if you love me: you may figure how I long to hear of you. Write like your own kind self, — immediately, to your Friend who loves you, whose Friend you are *auf ewig*. I know you; you will not keep me waiting an hour that you can help. Is *Rübezahl* far advanced again? Is your Mother well and kind to you and me? Assure her of my affectionate esteem. Adieu! I wait anxiously to hear of you: I am your own forever,

T. Carlyle.

[1] "Paradise," better known as "Greenknowe," is a very pretty little place a short distance farther out of Haddington than Sunnybank (Tenterfield) so often mentioned in Mrs. Carlyle's Letters. — There is also a "Paradise" at Ormiston, six or seven miles from Haddington.

[2] The garden is one hundred and forty-six feet long and forty-six wide.

[*On the margins.*] The address is Mr. Page's, Kew Green, London. We are here in lodgings (Charlie B[uller] and I) only for a time. They speak of France; but I do not think of going with them.

The place is pleasant and quiet, and coaches every half-hour will take you to London for a shilling. It has rained three-fourths of the time since I left you: today and yesterday, it poured incessantly. — Write soon, that I may write soon, and tell you more. God bless you, Dearest! farewell and love me!

Letter 97

Miss Welsh to T. Carlyle, Mr. Page's, Kew Green

[*Forwarded to 4, Middelton Terrace, Pentonville.*]

Bridge of Earn, Thursday, '1 July, 1824.'

[By Post-mark]

My dearest Friend, — On Saturday I said within myself, Well, I shall surely have a Letter tonight! In that case he shall wait three weeks *at least* for his answer, that he may learn what it is to count the hours till Post-time, day after day; to expect and to expect till the heart is sick of expectation: and if I do not hear to-night — if I do not! the Lord have mercy on his soul! I shall send him such a Letter by tomorrow's Post! so indignant and so cutting that it will annihilate him on the spot! *Patientia sæpe læsa fit furor!*[1] he had better

[1] "Furor fit læsa sæpius patientia" is the correct form of the proverb. (Patience, when too often abused, becomes madness.)

take care what he is about. Let me see, it shall begin, "Sir," — and here the Postwoman's one knock at the door put a stop to my musing. My Mother came in with a Letter; I ventured to enquire if it was for me? "You may be sure of that"; then handing it to me, with a glance at the address, and a smile that boded evil, "I suppose *that* will cure your head." I replied very boldly, "I have no doubt but it will help"; and broke the seal with a horrible thumping at my heart. But before I had deciphered the first three lines, I was requested to *finish my tea. Gott und der Teufel!* (I must not swear in English!) my tea indeed! I gulped it down like as much senna, which I abominate above all drugs on the face of the earth. And at last I was permitted, under these promising auspices, to read to the end! . . .

Your sudden impatience to hear from me is monstrous inconvenient just at present; for all the magnanimous resolution I made of frightening you out of your wits about me, when it comes to the point I cannot bring myself to occasion you, voluntarily, a moment's pain. And never was anybody less fit for writing or doing any one sensible thing, than I am just now. To write sooner was impossible. All Sunday I was in bed with my old enemy headache, which has been playing the very Deuce with me and *Rübezahl*, almost ever since you went away. On Monday I was busied from seven in the morning till twelve at night in packing and preparing to set out for this place at four-and-twenty hours' warning. On Tuesday I rode to Edinburgh on horse-back, and was engaged unavoidably after I arrived. Where do you think I spent the evening? You could never guess.

In the Green-room of the Theatre[1] with Marianne — Paton! I question much if Meister's Marianne was half so charming as mine. She is the most graceful, dignified-looking young creature you ever set your eyes upon. We were friends five years ago: at that time we entered into a league offensive and defensive against all the old women and starched-up Misses of our acquaintance, and vowed to love one another all the days of our lives with the ardour of seventeen. You cannot think how my heart beat when I saw her again in the Playhouse about a week since. I had galloped to Town on purpose: it was one of the most delightful moments of my existence when the curtain drew up and discovered her to me inch by inch, the same but infinitely lovelier than when I knew her and loved her five years ago. On Tuesday night she was still more brilliant. Had you but seen her after a display of talent that had thrown the whole house into an ecstacy, when she flew into my arms with the whole soul in her face, and asked me, "What did *He* say?" The *he* was a young man who had been standing by me, and who I suspect is her lover. — But I have no time for all this just now. There have already been three messages for me to join the company.

I scarcely know yet into what we have got here: I have been in bed almost ever since my arrival yesterday. I am ashamed to send you such a brief scrawl; but do not consider this as any Letter. Write to me at Haddington in about ten days. I scarce know where I shall be till then. Be upon your good behaviour for God's sake. Tell

[1] The Old Theatre Royal which stood where the General Post Office now stands.

me more about the geniuses; and expect a tremendous Letter from me upon my return. Blessings on you, my dear, dear Brother. Yours for ever,

JANE B. WELSH.

Be sure you are not longer than ten days. Lord, Lord, this bustle is dreadful!

LETTER 98

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

BIRMINGHAM, 22 July, 1824.

DEAREST, — Were I not morally certain that you cannot send me a Letter till you have got one from me, I doubt if I should even yet muster spirits enough to write three lines which you could endure to read. Mortal was scarcely ever shook and swept and shovelled to and fro at this rate since the Deluge of Noah. My ideas cannot rest, for nothing about me or my fortunes rests. The Wandering Jew or Shoemaker of Jerusalem was but a type of me. From day to day my scene changes, my companions change, my hopes, my fears; nothing stays with me but my old friends Disease and *Tedium vitæ*, kind followers, that at a closer or a wider distance never fail to trace my footsteps, turn me whither I may.

Well, here I am in *Brummagem*, the City of Smiths, among a thousand steam engines, and pestiferous magazines of vitriol and copperas, and Socinianism and bacon-grease! What has brought me hither, and will keep me for a month? I declare I almost cease to be surprised or anxious about any thing; by and by I fancy I shall reach the enviable quietism of

"... some ancient sage philosopher,
That has read Alexander Ross over,"[1]

to whom the ceaseless mutations of this great noisy roundabout are nothing more than noise, and whose good or evil exists only in the *sanctum sanctorum* of his inner man. 'Tis a consummation devoutly to be wished: But in the meantime I must relate, not moralize. — Some days before your last kind lively Letter reached me, I had bidden farewell to Kew, and the family of the Bullers. We parted good friends, as I positively declined accompanying them to France, and myself advised the sending of their son to Cambridge instantly. . . . The presence of a certain John Badams of Birmingham coupled with the condition of my thrice-blessed clay decided my first movement. Badams whom I had seen and talked with largely by the intervention of the helpful Mrs. Montagu, impressed me deeply with a feeling of his original, just and strong intellect, and his honest, frank, affectionate mind. He is a connoisseur in pictures and sciences; was bred a Physician, but has relinquished the practice of his Art in favour of Chemistry, in which I understand him to be possessed of secrets that have already realized many thousands for him, and may yet realize him millions. He promised to cure me of dyspepsia, or at least alleviate my curse! He invited me to spend six weeks in his house, under his constant care, till he saw how matters stood with me; and here I am! There is something strange in all this to me; something eminently alien to my Scottish habits.

[1] "There was an ancient sage philosopher,
That had read Alexander Ross over."
"Hudibras," Pt. i. canto ii. ll. 1, 2.

Badams and I have been together but three days, yet we are acquaintances as of twenty years' standing. We have argued and talked about two folio volumes: I feel as if half the house were mine. Whether he will do me any good I know not;[1] in the mean time, he is very diligent in taking me to ride and see company, in feeding me with half-raw eggs and floods of tea, and wine *before* dinner, and many other items, in sending me to sleep and rousing me, and driving me in short thro' all the training by which he has already cured some half-dozen hopeless stomachists, and among others raised himself from a state which he says, for four years was worse than mine, into a condition of health superior to that of Thomas Cribb himself. However it may be, I purpose to enjoy myself for some time, among the originals of *Brummagem*, of which there seem to be several; in visiting Kenilworth and Warwick and Stratford and Lichfield and the Leasowes; and meditating what is next to be done when I return to London, whither I am bound again at least for a season, so soon as I depart. Some little business I have already on hand: the *Life of Schiller*, increased by new translations and enlargements, is to be published as a separate book — tho' whether by Taylor or Whittaker is not quite settled — and I am to get it ready while here. Afterwards, I doubt not, there will be work enough; and in London there are many characters whom it will do my heart

[1] "Assure him [Badams] of my unabated regards and gratitude; he *did* more for me than he is aware of; helped to illuminate the dark Unbelief of my heart, which is infinitely worse than bodily sickness. Say to him that I have a *friendship* for him, and understand (what the most have quite forgotten) something of the meaning of that word." — Carlyle to Dr. Carlyle, 18th April, 1831.

and my understanding good to study. Oh how I have wished that you were there; among kindred people, women and men that would appreciate and instruct you; that your high and gifted soul might no longer waste itself in ill-directed efforts, that its affections might no longer be checked and wasted in the barren clime of Haddington! My best Jane! words are feeble to express the anxieties I sometimes feel on your account. Your spirit is the noblest I have *yet* found among women; and you are still uninstructed, even unconvinced of your highest duties; your destiny still lies before you void and formless as my own. Will you waste such endowments as Nature bestows only on her favourites, one among many millions? Will you not rather up and be doing; summon all your soul and strength and mind to resist the evil influences of your situation and to forward the good? I swear you shall yet be worthy of yourself, and I shall rejoice that I ever saw you. But Oh the difficulties, the mistakes, the wanderings! Sometimes tears half force their way into my eyes when I think of you. I speak this as a brother, I might almost say as a Guardian Spirit. God only knows how it may be: sometimes I hope all, sometimes I fear all. One thing you must *not* do — forget or separate yourself from me, unworthy as I am, till you have found some worthier. It is through me that you hold some intercourse with that ideal world towards which your inmost nature has always striven: of my feelings towards *you* in my better moments I am proud. "But whither all this?" you cry: "is the unhappy youth gone crazy?" Do not say so: these things deserve the earnest solemn consideration of us both. Also, I still hope to see you in London! The Orator

blushed like scarlet, when I hinted to him that your Mother and you felt offended with him: I have promised to mediate and procure his forgiveness. Depend upon it he loves you better than almost any one but I and your Mother. He still counts on seeing you. Do forgive him, and procure his pardon from your Mother, *for my sake*. The man has many follies, but there is true blood in his heart. He is infinitely more reasonable than when you saw him; his health is feebler, the hacks of quality have nearly altogether left him, he is Edward Irving once more. Will you forgive him, then, my *Liebling?* A heart with any touch of genuine love in it is precious as diamonds in this world of selfishness and empty cant. — Also will my own Lassie write to me without a day's delay? Will she? I know I do not deserve it; but I also know your goodness and tenderness; you will remember how I have been, and how I am. The first hour you can spare you will remember me in merciful forgiveness. Write, write, *meine ewig Liebste. Lebewohl!* [my ever best loved one. Farewell!]. I am ever yours,

T. Carlyle.

Tell me has your Mother ceased to like me? I hope she never will, I sometimes feel as if she never ought. Irving will have it, you and she should come and live in London. Will you? Will she? Give her my kindest regards: I must always esteem her, and tenderly care for her, however she may feel to me. — O do write — write — the address is: "J. Badams, Esq., Birmingham." I shall count and count till the Letter come. Adieu my Dearest!

Meister is growing a kind of small very small *lion* in London: the newspapers puff him, the people

read him, many venerate him very highly. The periodical Rhadamanthuses of Grub-street pat me on the head, saying I am a clever fellow and must translate them much more. . . .

Tell me all that you do and have been doing — all, all. I have got a whole sheaf of poetic autographs, and among them a piece of Lord Byron's writing! I will send them the first frank I can get. Write Dearest.

Would you believe it, I found the other day in London that two volumes had *already* been selected from Musäus, and among them *Rübezahl!* This I learned from a bookworm. Do you complete *Rübezahl* nevertheless. We shall see further into it.

Letter 99

Miss Welsh to T. Carlyle, C/o J. Badams, Esq., Birmingham

Haddington, 11th Aug., '1824.'

Thou art indeed my Guardian Spirit! my Good Angel! Forget or separate myself from thee! That will I never, while I retain my senses. Am I not bound to thee by a thousand obligations? Whom have I to direct me but only thee? Woe to me then, if I let go thy helping hand; if I hearken to another voice than thine, my Brother, Protector, Friend!

I have kept you waiting, but do not blame me. There has been such a Tragedy performing here! and I could not think of writing till I saw the end of it. I declare one would need a heart of flint to bear a destiny like mine. I flattered myself that I should

live *this* Summer in peace, and was resolved to turn it to some account; but alas! alas! man proposeth, God disposeth. My Evil Genius has been at work again, and I am neither more happy nor more diligent this Summer than I was last.

The Devil put it in my head to go to Musselburgh Races. I had been ill of bile or vapours for a day or two before, and I imagined that amusement and exercise would do me good. It was the Devil too that tempted me to go on horse-back, by which means I drew a multitude of eyes on me. Oh! the folly of men! If I had written a book, or made the most delicious pudding in the world, they would not have admired me half as much as for this idle display of my horsemanship and pretty riding-dress. Can you believe it? One young gentleman (a Sutherlandshire-man) fell in love with me in good earnest, — thro' my veil too (Lord help his simplicity!). He had been once in a room with me some eighteen months ago; on the strength of which acquaintance and of his quality, he joined me on the race-ground; and from that hour till this he has been seldom from my side. In Edinburgh he haunted me wherever I turned myself; and before I had been at the Bridge of Earn two days, he was there also; — there was no escaping his ubiquity. During the time which we spent together at that disgusting watering-place, he quite won my Mother's heart; so that she invited him and his Sister (whom, *soit dit en passant*, neither she nor myself had ever set eyes upon) to visit us on our return to Haddington. I could have wished my Mother's prudence more or her hospitality less. But when she takes a fit of fondness for any one, it is vain to interfere with her in the indulgence of it while it lasts.

Well, on the day appointed my gentleman arrived, accompanied by a little smiling girl from an English boarding-school. And what I had foreseen and dreaded came to pass: the first time that I was left alone with him out came a matrimonial proposition in due form. In my life I never felt such difficulty in giving a refusal; not that I had the smallest disposition in the world to consent. Oh dear no! My new lover has neither the fire of Lord Byron nor the wit of Mr. Terrot; and in point of elegance he cannot be compared with my Steamboat Colonel.[1] But then he has fair silky locks, the sweetest eyes in nature, a voice like music, and a heart so warm and true and so wholly, wholly mine! All which had such a softening effect upon me that I could not bring myself to say I did not love him. I preferred telling a lie of any magnitude to wounding him with such cruel words. Besides my Mother had told me that the handsomest way of refusing a man was to say that I was engaged. So I did not scruple to say so in the present instance. Fortunately the distress which this declaration threw him into, saved me from further questioning. I should have found it rather troublesome at the moment to have furnished my beau-ideal with a name. Poor youth, he threw himself down on the sofa beside me, and wept and sobbed like a child. I called him "dear Dugald" to pacify him, and kissed his forehead at least half a dozen times (was not that good of me?); but he would not be comforted: he lay in bed and cried all the rest of the day. My Mother sat and cried beside him; and his Sister and I cried in another apartment. About

[1] The "fascinating Colonel of the Guards," who "held an umbrella over" her "for twenty-four hours" on her trip from Glasgow to Fort William. — See *ante*, Letter 25.

ten o'clock at night my Mother prevailed on him to rise and take a walk! She thought the cool air would do the poor Boy good; for he had cried himself into a fever. I was sent on with him before, that he might say out what he had to say to me, and be done with it. My Mother and Catherine[1] followed at a little distance. What a dark, silent, sorrowful walk it was! We were on the way back, he had not spoken for several minutes, when all at once he gave a sort of cry and fell down at my side. I shut my eyes and stood motionless: I could not stir to assist him; I thought he was dead. Fortunately my Mother had more presence of mind; she ran up to us when she saw him fall, and lifted him off his face. God! how he looked! He was as white as ashes, and his eyes were wide open and fixed. He stirred and spoke at last; but he could not stand without supporting himself on my Mother; and what he said was quite incoherent. However, I was thankful. His Sister behaved heroically on the occasion: she adores her Brother, yet instead of occupying herself with him, or increasing my agony by any expression of her fears (as it was natural for her to have done), she threw her arms about my neck, and besought me not to distress myself, for that he would get *better sense* in time. My Mother half-carried him home, and he went to bed delirious; but his fever left him before morning. However no entreaties could prevail on him to rise or take a morsel of food. He lay for three days and nights without sleep and almost without sustenance, tossing on his bed and crying his lovely eyes out. His Sister and my Mother began to get dreadfully alarmed; for he positively assured them that he would never

[1] Dugald's sister.

rise again; and, if he abstained much longer from eating, it was probable that he never would. For me, I had been nearly distracted ever since the night scene at the water-side. I resolved to try my influence with him, as theirs had been tried to no purpose. It was not a time to be thinking about etiquette; so I "girded up my mind," walked deliberately into his room and sat down by my Mother and Catherine on the side of his bed. He gave me a great stare, then hid his face in the bedclothes; I asked very gravely, What ailed him? He stared again, and answered, Was I mad? I repeated my question; he laughed; then cried; then scolded me for making him laugh. I asked, Would he take some tea? He said he would. Would he rise and come into the drawing-room? Yes, yes, he would do anything I bid him. So he rose and took tea with us. In about a week, by skilful treatment, we brought him to a more reasonable frame of mind. Then came your Letter, which made matters worse than ever. It seems I turned pale when it was delivered to me (I always do when I get a Letter which I have been looking for), and then I blushed (the most natural thing on earth, for I noticed Mr. G—— staring at me); from which aspects he concluded like a sensible young man, that this must be a Letter from his favoured rival. His agitation became so distressing that I was obliged to leave the room; and I was no sooner gone than he tumbled off his chair. I heard him fall, and my Mother threw up the window. I ran back; he was again on the floor, with the same death-like look which I had seen before. He came to himself in a few minutes, but the fainting fit was followed by spasms which lasted near an hour; and to complete the business, as soon as he

recovered and my Mother could leave him, she came into the room where I was and took hysterics. Imagine, if you can, my feelings all this while. You will have some idea of them when I tell you it entered my mind for *one instant* to promise that I would be his Wife! Well for me that it was only for an instant. This however was the last trial of my fortitude. The poor Boy is not ungenerous, he is only weak. He saw the distress he was occasioning us, and was sorry for it. Since that evening he has struggled manfully with his grief; and with such success, that he left us today almost the same as before the unlucky affair took place,— only that he looks more thoughtful, more manly, as if in a few days he had lived years.

He is really a lovable creature this Dugald G., now that his whim of marrying me is past. His affection for me is of no common sort; it is tender, devoted, hopeless; even his nervous sensibility which I would despise in another man, is in him excusable, nay almost interesting; for it has been occasioned (I am persuaded) by a misfortune which befel him at the outset in life, and which gave a shock to his young mind from which it has never yet recovered. I will tell you about it, if you care to know, some other time; for the present I suspect you have enough of him.

There have I more than filled my paper with this long history, which tho' deeply interesting to me, may perhaps be the very reverse to you; and I have still a thousand things to ask and say. I have a story to tell you about the abominable little Doctor; of his meanness and hypocrisy that would shame the morals of a crocodile. I have some curious matter too, which concerneth the W——s. Only think!

they wanted to send me as a sort of Wife-nursery-maid with their Boy-Officer to Malta! I think the people are all gone mad at present.

Will you write speedily and tell me about yourself? You cannot think how well I liked your last Letter: it had more the aspect of hope and happiness than any I ever received from you.

My heart is softened towards that vexatious Orator, by what you say of him. I will answer his Letter tomorrow, so please the Fates. He has got a little Son,[1] it seems. Have you heard if it has discovered genius yet? I sometimes think it is possible I may go to London after all. Would you be glad to see me there? I think so. Have you got rid of that infamous accent of yours? Remember I can never enjoy your society to the full until you do. My poor ears are in a fever every time they hear it. Why do you speak Annandale? Why are you not as elegant as Colonel Alex?[2] My beau-ideal would then be found. *Him*[3] is returned: you were right; he has not forgotten me! This much I know and no more: I have not seen him.

I am sure you are sick of deciphering my hieroglyphics.

Address to Miss Baillie Welsh, Templand, Thornhill. — Am not I very good-natured, or very simple?

God forever bless you.

JANE WELSH.

Your last Letter was read with some degree of favour. My Mother bids me make her compli-

[1] Edward, born 22d July, 1824.

[2] See *ante*, Letter 25.

[3] The artist "Benjamin B."

ments to you, and say that she has neither forgotten you nor did she esteem you less. What wonderful consideration! I hope you are sufficiently gratified. I can tell you you may be grateful to me for this great Letter or any Letter at all today. The handsomest and most fashionable man in Britain is to dine here: he is one of the Life-guards, and a Cousin of my Mother's. He wears mustachios and four huge rings, and chains, and the Lord knows what, and he is six feet two inches high, and only eight-and-twenty![1]

If this Doctor cures you I will bless him all the days of my life.

Letter 100

T. Carlyle to Miss Welsh, Haddington

Birmingham, 12th August, 1824.

My Dearest, — What in Heaven's name is the matter?[2] Are you sick or in distress? Is that cursed headache tormenting you that you cannot write to me? Or are you angry at me, and determined to avenge yourself by keeping silence and leaving me to the guardian Angels of the Imagination? *Tantæne animis cœlestibus iræ?* [Is there such wrath in heavenly minds?][3] Have you the heart wilfully to keep me in impatient anxieties for a month, and then begin your Letter as you

[1] This was the foolish and unfortunate Captain James Baillie, who in later years became a pensioner on Carlyle's bounty.—See "New Letters of Thomas Carlyle," ii. 249.

[2] Carlyle had not yet received Miss Welsh's letter of the 11th of August.

[3] Virgil, "Æneid," i. 11.

threatened with a "Sir"? Do not, I entreat you: what use is it to vex one another, as if Fate did not vex us both sufficiently. I declare I know not what to make of it: every morning, that old hook-nosed man totters up to the Post-office; bringing Badams news of vitriol and vermillion and pictures and sweepstakes; bringing me too Letters and packets from the north and from the south — but from Jane no breath of tidings! What shall I do? If I knew you to be well and happy, I could wait for months in patience: as it is, I must wait; but Heaven knows, not in patience. If you do not mean to be very cruel, you will write me — tho' it were but a line — to say that you are in the land of the living, at peace and cheerful and not utterly oblivious of the all-important *me*. I pray God that I may hear of your welfare, and that common causes only have prevented you from writing. I mean not to languish in the pastoral style at present: but dear Jane, do write; and there's an end of it!

Perhaps after all you have but been jaunting up and down the world, and have had no leisure to think or talk, much less to write. Perhaps even, you have never got my last scrawl, and know not whither to address a Letter. If so, you are still a stranger to the sad news that *Rübezahl*, your much laboured *Rübezahl*, has been already printed in English! I have not seen the book; one Crabb Robinson, an Ancient Templar, told me of its existence, and more by token, that they had called the lubber Gnome himself by the name of *Number-nip*, which Crabb thought no ordinary stroke of editorial felicity. Finish your Tale however, and let us keep it as a memorial of your diligence. The publication is of course now out of the question;

but the benefit to you is not lost; and we shall easily devise some other task for you. Nay I have already thought of one; which I want much to hear your vote upon. That interminable *Life of Schiller*, has at length drop by drop appeared in the *London Magazine* — all except the last fragment; and after much higgling to and fro, I have nearly agreed to publish it in a separate and much enlarged form with Taylor and Hessey — they allowing me fifty pounds additional, for the projected improvements, the extent of which *need* be only very small but will most probably be considerable. Among these improvements, the most obvious are translations of Schiller's best pieces in prose and verse — scenes from his plays, poems; and extracts from his historical and philosophical writings. Now is there aught here for my own Scholar? What if you should send for *Schillers Gedichte* (the two first volumes of his *Werke*) and read them over, selecting whatever you liked best, and were most disposed for? "O you fool! I cannot, I cannot!" O you fool, you can, you can. The Tiger[1] (not of Bengal, but Dundas-street) would get you these books from Gillies; they are to be had for a trifle in the book-shops. Here would be room for your critical sagacity, and for the exercise of your powers of composition. Many of the poems you will not like, or perhaps fully comprehend — unless you are wiser than your philosopher: but others of them are delightful. The Germans prate about the *Cranes of Ibycus* (which is not bad) and the *Ritter Toggenburg* (which is not good) and the *Spaziergang* and the *Ideal* and the *Glocke* and many more, which I relish even less: but among those I

[1] *I. e.* Walter Dunlop, Edinburgh.

have yet read I remember none that pleased me more than *Hero and Leander* and the *Alpenlied* both in the second volume. Try the *Alpenlied:* it is short and quite a jewel for beauty. Or will you have scenes of Plays — translate me the scene between Posa and Philip in *Don Carlos*, or any scene in *Wallenstein* that you like. Or will you have Prose: translate me Schiller's critique on *Bürgers Gedichte* (I think in the eighth volume) or any other thing that strikes you. Trouble yourself not about incorrectness and inability; try something if you love me: for look you, *meine Liebe*, I have set my heart on it; something of thine must and shall be in this book; as I predicted last year that we should go forth together *umschlungen zärtlich Seit' an Seite* [clasped fondly side by side]. And think if it will not be pretty to have your little casket locked up and begirt on every side in the masses of my coarse stoneware; shielded from all danger of critical-teeth, with J. W. at the bottom, and no soul but ourselves one whit the wiser! You must write to me long and largely on this: and do not think to *scham Abram*, you lazy creature, and tell me that you have not talents *et cetera;* I tell you I have firmly resolved that your mind *shall* not run to waste, but come forth in its native beauty, before all is done, and let the world behold it. Shall your life of noble tho' half-blind struggling be utterly lost? Where is the laurel wreath I promised you? Be diligent and patient and wise, and it shall yet be yours. Write about these things to me — seriously and copiously. What is the use of me, if not to help you forward in the path of duty and improvement? There is not another soul alive that wishes with such earnestness to see you

good and perfect, the lovely and graceful and wise and dignified woman it is in your power to be. Oh that my powers and wishes should be so discrepant! Yet cease not to consult with me, at least; by our united efforts, notwithstanding all our errors, much, much, may be accomplished: let us work while it is called to-day; for the night cometh wherein no man can work! I hope from you more than I will trust to words: it depends *on us both* that the fairest visions be not utterly abolished, and nothing but a waste wreck of dreary ruin left behind!

I have left no room to speak about myself. Badams still swears he will *bring me into condition*, will restore my health and set me fairly on my feet unshackled by the infernal miseries that have almost sunk me into utter nothingness. If he keep his word, I laugh at fortune! As yet however it is all, or very nearly all, prospective: I am weak and stupid and depressed as ever; for the man has been experimenting on me, and drugs are an abomination to me in all their shapes. What think you of rising at six o'clock, and galloping two hours upon a fiery hunter before breakfast? I began this morning. Badams is one of the finest fellows I have ever seen: in years scarcely older than myself, he has his destiny as it were subdued and lying at his feet, and all things fit around him, like the wheels in an eight-day clock. I cannot help wondering at the man, and at the relation I am in to him. Six weeks ago I did not know of his existence, and now we are acquaintances as of fifty years standing! Badams has a clear head, an ardent simple heart, and no *genius*, as you would call it: thus he is quiet and kind and frolicsome and good. I begin to think the

world has more worthy persons in it than I counted on. I have also seen learned ladies here! — But *satis jam!* No word further till you write me, on far more interesting topics! And when will that be, *Liebchen?* I declare it will be doubly and trebly hard, if you keep me waiting longer. Do not! Do not! I long to know your history, your thoughts and purposes. Tell me everything, in your dear *chatting* style. There is nothing in life like one of your right Letters. Ask me about your reading — about everything: I am now at leisure; and shall I not forever be

Dein Eigener! [Thy own!]

T. Carlyle.

Tell your Mother that she must not forget me, or think of me otherwise than as I think of her. Is she well and *good friends* with you and yours? Make my kindest compliments to her, and claim for me a place in her remembrance. — Write, write, if you love me. — The Orator has an *heir*, with blue eyes I am told, and both straight in its head![1] The good Orator of course is one of the happiest men in England. Are you reconciled to him. Be so — you will, will you not?

The address, if you have forgot it, is: Care of John Badams, Esq., Birmingham.

[1] Unlike his father in this respect.

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